

FICTION BY DONALD HALL / AMERICA'S LACK OF POLITICAL REALISM

The Atlantic Monthly

OCTOBER 1996

OFF HIS PEDESTAL

*An argument that
Thomas Jefferson should be
condemned as a racist
and expelled from
the American pantheon*

by **Conor
Cruise
O'Brien**

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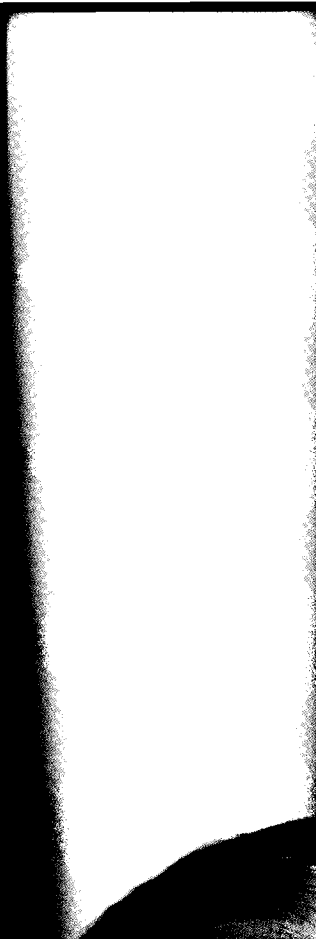
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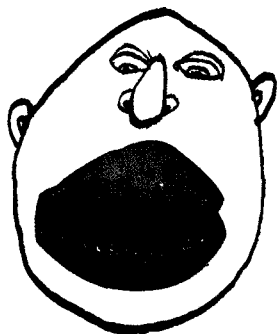
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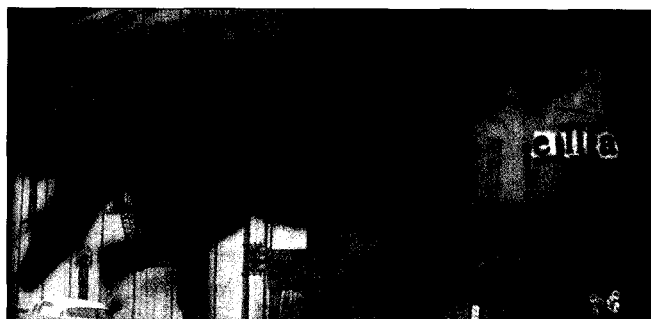
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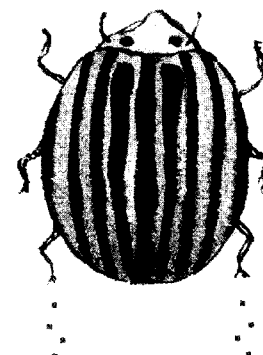




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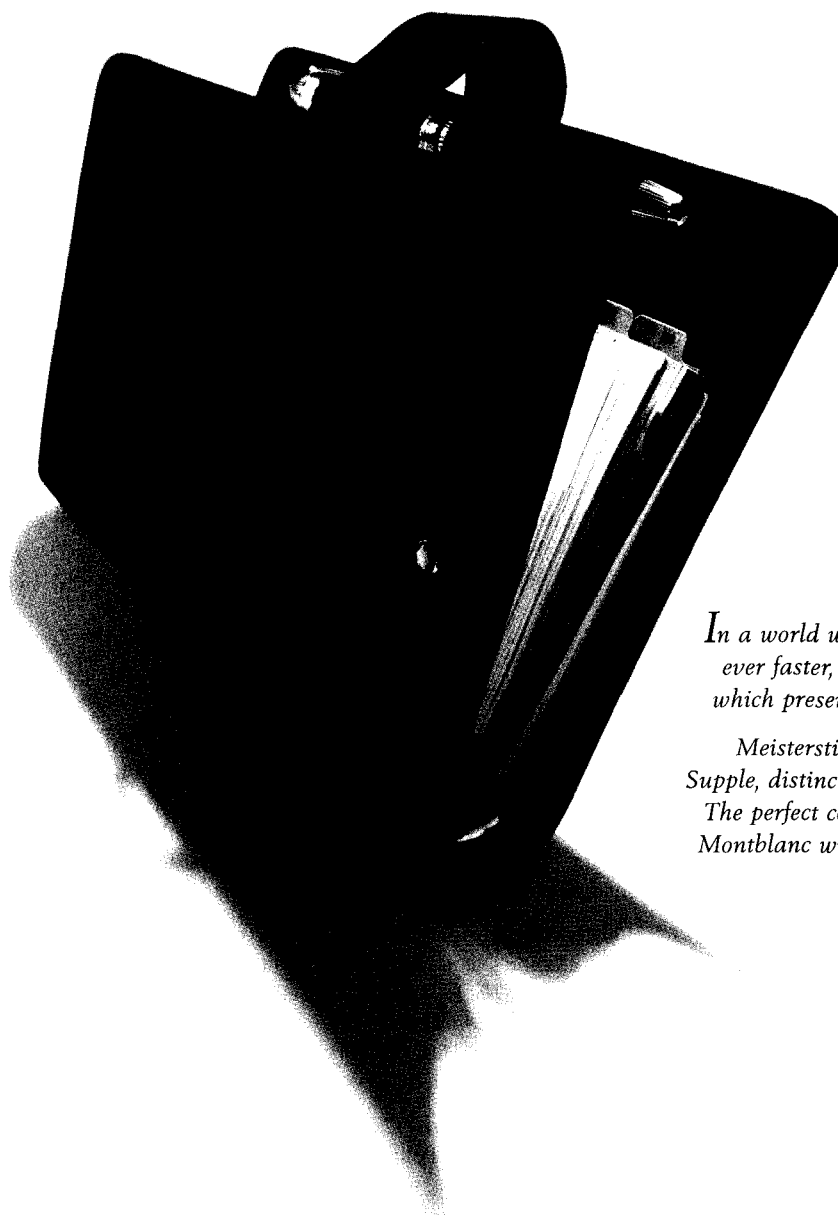
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77 NORTH WASHINGTON STREET

THE masthead in this issue of *The Atlantic Monthly* is the first one in seventeen years that does not bear—"boast" would be a better word—the name James Fallows under the title Washington editor. Fallows this month becomes the editor of the newsmagazine *U.S. News & World Report*. In terms of corporate taxonomy the move is a familial one: the owner and chairman of *The Atlantic*, Mortimer B. Zuckerman, is also the owner and editor-in-chief of *U.S. News*. Fallows's new position brings great editorial and administrative challenges. Perhaps just as daunting will be the necessary adjustments in the lifestyle of a long-standing writer, radio commentator, computer hacker, and tennis bum.

James Fallows's first article for *The Atlantic*, in 1975, was a biographical piece about Senator Lloyd Bentsen, of Texas, who at the time was also a plausible candidate for the Democratic nomination for the presidency—part of a large pack that would ultimately be winnowed to Jimmy Carter. "I don't think I've ever been as excited by anything I've done in journalism as the first time I did a freelance piece for *The Atlantic*," Fallows recalls. "Hav-

ing seen the magazine all my conscious life, I could hardly believe that my own name was in it." Fallows, a Harvard graduate and Rhodes scholar who had been an editor at *The Washington Monthly* and at *Texas Monthly*, went to work for candidate Carter as a speechwriter, and followed him to the



MARTIN CORNELL

White House. He was invited by Robert Manning, then the editor of *The Atlantic*, to join the staff in 1979. All told, Fallows has contributed almost 120 articles to *The Atlantic*. Some of them, such as "Defense, Taxes, and the Budget" (August, 1981), "Immigration" (November, 1983), "The Three Fiscal Crises" (September, 1985), and "Containing Japan" (May, 1989), have helped to shape debate that continues to this day over the future of national defense, over the uncontrolled growth of entitlements, over our trading relationships, over the very complexion of American society. Through it all

he has written several books, most recently *Breaking the News: How the Media Undermine Democracy* (1996).

Fallows will continue to appear on our masthead, as a contributing editor, and thus we will continue to solicit his advice—and, from time to time, his byline. —THE EDITORS

CONTRIBUTORS

James Fallows ("A Talk With Bill Clinton") is the editor of *U.S. News & World Report* and a contributing editor of *The Atlantic*.

Erica Funkhouser ("India Cotton Shirt") is a poet and a playwright. She is the author of *Natural Affinities* (1983) and *Sure Shot and Other Poems* (1992).

Linda Gregerson ("Target") teaches Renaissance literature at the University of Michigan. She is the author of *The Reformation of the Subject* (1995). Her poem in this issue will appear in her book *The Woman Who Died in Her Sleep*, to be published by Houghton Mifflin in November.

Donald Hall ("From Willow Temple") is the author of *Their Ancient Glittering Eyes* (1992) and *The Museum of Clear Ideas* (1993). His latest book, *The Old Life: New Poems*, was published in June.

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Steven Nadis ("The Sub-Seabed Solution"), a former staff researcher for the Union of Concerned Scientists, writes regularly for *Nature*, *Science*, and *Omni*. He has co-authored several books, including

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Conor Cruise O'Brien ("Thomas Jefferson: Radical and Racist") is a contributing editor of *The Atlantic* and the author of many books, including *The Siege: The Saga of Israel and Zionism* (1986) and *The Great Melody: A Thematic Biography of Edmund Burke* (1993). His article in this issue is drawn from his book *The Long Affair: Thomas Jefferson and the French Revolution, 1785–1800*, to be published next month by the University of Chicago Press.

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Barbara Wallraff ("Two Kinds of Paradise") is a senior editor of *The Atlantic*.

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indicating the shape's orientation.



fig. 2

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fig. 3

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fig. 4

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LETTERS

Breast Cancer

Although I am not qualified to judge David Plotkin's article "Good News and Bad News About Breast Cancer" (June *Atlantic*) from a medical standpoint, I am certainly qualified to make a judgment from my perspective as the mother of a cancer victim. I am appalled at his lack of understanding, his brazen thoughtlessness, his disregard for the impact his words might have on those who are already suffering.

What is worse, my daughter read it too, and she now believes that she is absolutely doomed. She has translated Plotkin's examples of premature death to mean her immediate demise, not in ten or twenty years. Now. No chance to live. No hope. No cure.

Breast cancer was diagnosed in my thirty-six-year-old daughter in August of last year. The cells were poorly differentiated, which is, as Dr. Plotkin points out with thoughtless candor, "bad news, no matter what we bring to bear therapeutically." This doomsday approach may or may not be an accurate prognosis for her. I don't know what will happen.

What I do know is that she has had the best medical care available. She has suffered through breast removal, breast reconstruction, chemotherapy, and radiation treatments. And I know that until she read Dr. Plotkin's article, she had high hopes that she would live to guide her six children through their childhood and on to adulthood. She had made plans for her future with a loving husband. She believed in her treatment, and she had the best possible mental attitude that her hopes would become her reality.

Linda now asks what was the point of all that painful treatment, if metastasis has already begun and she is soon to die. She was very afraid to have the radiation and told her physician she wasn't going to do it. He, thank God, offered her his strong support and advice. He told her that she must fight this insidious disease

with everything she's got. He talked with her about the importance of a good, positive mental attitude. Because he is a good physician, she took his advice. Now she questions that decision. Even worse, if cancer cells are found once again, she may well decide to forgo any treatment, based purely on Dr. Plotkin's opinion that she is absolutely doomed, which would make his thesis self-fulfilling and six children motherless before they need be.

Frances Elliott
Milwaukee, Wis.

David Plotkin's assertion that tumor biology is destiny will certainly irk a large number, if not the majority, of his readers. If this is true, and I believe it is for at least three quarters of the women I treat, intensification of therapy and a more widespread use of breast imaging will continue to have little influence on the mortality rate of this disease (a fact that Dr. Plotkin points out has already been true for the past half century). Highly toxic and potentially fatal regimens of treatment are being employed in the naive belief that if we could just push the chemotherapy dose a little higher we could get that last resistant tumor cell. Ultra-high-dose chemotherapy, supported by bone-marrow transplants (or, now more commonly, stem cells derived from the patient's blood), has become safer and less costly over the past five years. However, the question of its utility in breast cancer is unanswered. It has shown a trend toward increasing survival only in women with the lowest tumor burden, who are treated adjuvantly (right after surgery when it appears that all their disease has been removed), but this paucity of evidence has not kept transplant-supported chemotherapy from being routinely employed in patients with the heaviest tumor load, metastatic disease. This is being done while the only scientifically valid trial of high-dose chemotherapy in the adjuvant set-



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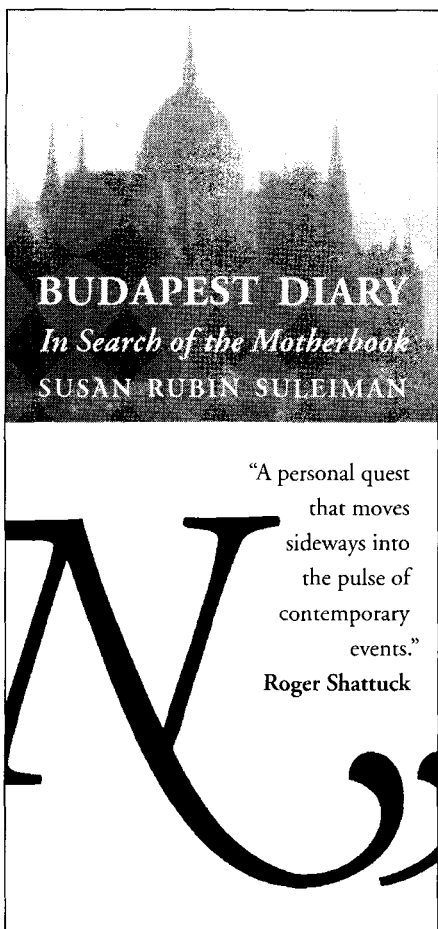
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ting is still collecting patients for study; it will not produce analyzable results for at least five years. If survival is more a function of tumor characteristics than of treatment, we should be investigating the least-morbid treatments, not the most-aggressive, for the former will offer the best combination of prolongation of survival and quality of life.

Charles D. Goldman, M.D.
*University of California, Davis
 Davis, Calif.*

Does David Plotkin seriously believe, as his article suggests, that better nutrition, increased job opportunities, longer life expectancy, and the natural processes of the female body (menstruation) are the root causes of increased rates of breast cancer among women today?

And does he also believe, conversely, that "women in the past" failed to develop breast cancer at the rates we see today because of an insufficient diet, shortened life expectancy, fewer job opportunities, and a decrease in the number of menstrual cycles?

Does improved nutrition, as he suggests, explain why the average age for girls to begin menstruating has fallen from the late teens to twelve? Is this decrease favorable or unfavorable to developing breast cancer?

Our rich, modern, highly processed and refined, animal-centered diet is today more than ever being implicated as the No. 1 cause of diseases and ailments like high blood pressure, heart attack, stroke, heart disease, diabetes, and cancer. For a medical doctor to write a fifteen-plus-page article about breast cancer and not include one sentence on preventive nutrition borders on either the criminally negligent or the blatantly ignorant.

M. A. Lewis
Los Angeles, Calif.

My wife, as an interested layperson, and I, as a recently retired medical oncologist, were both greatly pleased by the recent article on breast cancer by David Plotkin. He very eloquently and clearly presented the problems, after sifting through myriad facts and obviously extensive clinical experience.

I wish that I had had such a reference for many women in my years of practice. I now wish that I had had the time and ability to present the subject so

clearly. The article should be disseminated to all physicians dealing with breast cancer, and I would recommend it as reading for all intelligent women.

Charles M. Sinn, M.D.
Mill Creek, Wash.

As a young surgeon I participated in the early U.S. randomized trials of radical mastectomy versus radiation therapy, in the 1970s. This is the best summary I have seen of how difficult it is to translate the tentative and conservative conclusions of scientific research for the public when a disease becomes politicized. David Plotkin's nonpolemical approach and talent for explaining this complex and controversial subject make his article a landmark in science journalism.

Thomas M. Shapiro, M.D.
*San Jose Medical Group
 San Jose, Calif.*

David Plotkin replies:

I offer my sincere sympathy to Frances Elliott and her daughter. The conclusions she has drawn from my article, however, are not entirely justified. First, I emphasized in the article that the pathology term "poorly differentiated" is not very accurate. Only if the clinical course is rapidly progressive—that is, matches the pathology—is the outlook no better than bleak. DNA histograms, receptor data, or the like can provide a more optimistic prognosis for some "poorly differentiated" patients. Moreover, there is good news as well: at least half the women with breast cancer have a form of the disease that should cause them virtually no concern, and for which they do not need to be exposed to the overzealous therapies routinely offered. As I read the breast-cancer mortality statistics for the past sixty years and conclude that we are not making much progress, I feel obliged to present the facts rather than to gloss over the harsh reality.

I am in substantial agreement with Charles Goldman, but his idea that at least three quarters of his patients have cancers driven by their biology is a more conservative position than mine. Is evidence available that *any* percentage of breast cancers are not biology-driven? The increased five-year disease-free survival rate of heavily node-positive patients treated with ultra-high-dose chemotherapy is quite predictable. If all

the cytoreductive effect of ordinary serially employed chemotherapy regimens is put into one huge attack, the five-year disease-free rate will inevitably be higher than that seen in conventionally treated patients. This does not mean that long-term survival will be improved. Indeed, no such claim is made even by the proponents of the risky very aggressive therapy. The irony is that the burden of proof seems to have shifted from the advocate to the community—in other words, here is an experimental treatment that should be regarded as standard until it is shown to be no more effective than the conventional approach.

M. A. Lewis appears to have missed a key point of my article—that the higher-protein and higher-fat diet of modern Western women has caused the age of menarche to drop by several years. This fact, coupled with first pregnancies at a greater age, in my view plays a big role in the increased incidence of breast cancer. On the other hand, women several thousand years ago, with little or none of the rich foodstuffs at hand today, were considerably shorter, had fewer years of fecundity, and died young, the victims of pestilence, starvation, or carnivorous predation.

As Thomas Shapiro suggests, the oncology establishment, along with segments of the public, will likely continue to politicize this disease. Its agenda seems to lead its members to reject unpleasant conclusions even if they are credible.

Is Spirituality Irrational?

The core point that Wendy Kaminer ("The Latest Fashion in Irrationality," July *Atlantic*) makes about *The Celestine Prophecy*—and apparently every other book written about the near-death experience, angels, religion, spirituality, and presumably eschatology of any possible flavor—is that it and all books like it "argue by declaration." And yet Kaminer's piece is nothing more itself than argument by declaration. She simply declares any and all human spiritual beliefs irrational, and all statements relating thereto unreasoned and unscientific. Furthermore, she blithely associates them with UFO abductions and U.S. paramilitary militias. Apparently, all those billions of

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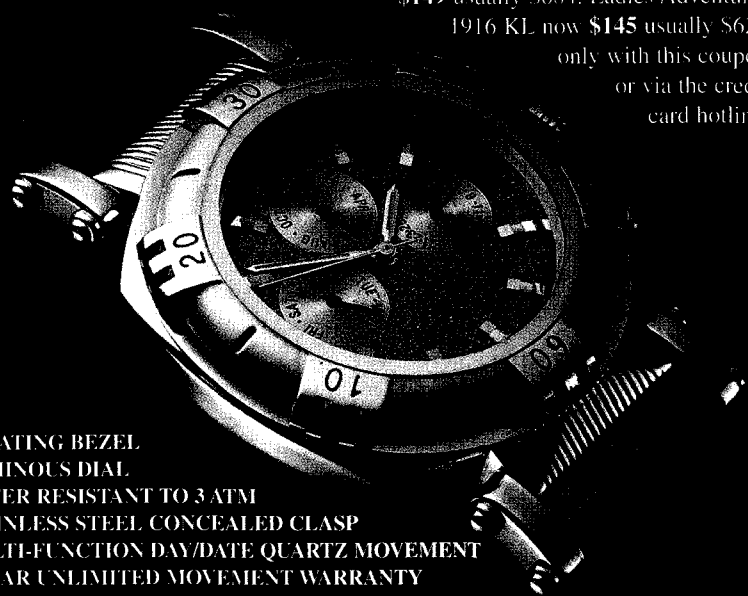
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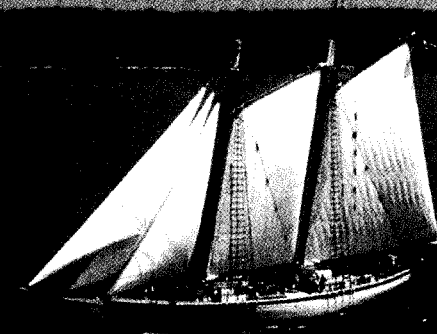
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people who hold religious beliefs are just
so many fringe lunatics waiting to blow
up federal buildings.

Kaminer's piece would be more con-
vincing if she offered a shred of evidence
for her position. A simple declaration of
her personal belief is not enough. I've
studied religion and human spirituality
quite seriously over the years, and I've
also studied science and technology. I've
encountered books with a New Age label
that were less than inspiring in their
depth of thought. I've also read many
books that were thoughtful, logically pre-
sented, and quite clear and precise in the
presentation of their sources and method-
ologies. Some of the best, in fact, dealt
with the near-death phenomenon, and
dealt with it as soundly as any other book
directed at a popular audience. Kaminer
tars with too wide a brush.

In all my reading and experience so
far, I have found nothing presented by
science and technology that precludes
there being a spiritual element to the
human being. In fact, quantum physics
holds special promise in opening up the
universe to other worlds—some of
which, as more-speculative physicists
have pointed out in their own popular
books, might resemble the afterlife de-
scribed in religion.

The bottom line is this: Maybe there
are no angels, afterlife, UFOs, or even a
God. Certainly their existence has not
yet been scientifically proved. But just
as certainly, their *nonexistence* remains
unproved. Any reasonable person would
therefore have to reserve judgment.
Kaminer does not. Therefore, her argu-
ment—actually, it is merely a wandering
diatribe—has no credibility.

Robert Allan Stewart
Nepean, Ont.

Wendy Kaminer appears to practice a
double standard in her attack on many
forms of modern spirituality. She argues
against a belief in angels, immortality,
the inner child, and even movements pro-
moting "a good attitude" because they
refuse to deal with evil, they criticize ra-
tional thinking and then flip-flop by cit-
ing scientific studies, they argue by sim-
ple declaration, and so on. Yet Kaminer
herself feels free to ignore all historical
precedents for contemporary spirituali-
ty—from Plato's mystical theories to the
long-standing belief in celestial beings

in virtually all religions, from Christian-
ity to Buddhism. Furthermore, she uses
rhetorical sleights-of-hand to denigrate
spiritual teachings, including misrepresen-
tation (if a spiritual book encourages a
childlike innocence, for instance, it be-
comes "childlike passivity") and ridicule
("Descending from heaven, or wherev-
er"). Incredibly, she even links contem-
porary spiritual teachings with violent
militia movements, using as her proof a
single individual ("I know a convert
..."). Kaminer might take a lesson from
the nineteenth-century skeptic philoso-
pher David Hume, who argued brilliant-
ly against all "proofs" of God, yet dealt
with the thorny issue of mysticism by
simply admitting to no personal experi-
ence of it—and leaving it at that.

Paul Angiolillo
Waltham, Mass.

Wendy Kaminer replies:

I'm accused of advancing fallacious
arguments against the existence of God,
angels, and UFOs, but I presented no ar-
guments, fallacious or compelling, either
denying or confirming supernatural real-
ities. Of course I have my doubts, but I
don't presume to harbor any particular
insights into the nature of the universe
and gave up wondering about the mean-
ing of life years ago. My own religious
beliefs are pretty simple: maybe God ex-
ists and maybe not.

What's interesting is that a critique of
popular spirituality books is read as a
dismissal of spiritual teachings through
the ages and of the mere possibility of
transcendence. My article was not about
God, angels, the prospect of immortality,
or the complicated, variable effect of re-
ligion on behavior. It was about one way
in which spiritual yearnings, fears of
death and disorder, and antagonism to-
ward rationalism are expressed in con-
temporary American culture. It specu-
lated about the relationship between
spiritual and political beliefs. I did not,
as Robert Allan Stewart hyperbolically
asserts, suggest that billions of believers
are potential terrorists. I simply pointed
out that the denial of coincidence at the
heart of many popular spirituality books
also gives rise to conspiracy theories.
Why is that a controversial point? It is
one of the obvious lessons of history that
fears of randomness and cravings for or-
der are not always benignly expressed.

Singapore Slings

Stephen Wrage told an Orwellian tale of sinister intrigue ("Watering to Endanger," June *Atlantic*). He claimed that police officers knocked ominously on his door late one night, demanded that he empty a saucer of standing water beneath his potted plant, and proceeded to interrogate him about his private affairs. He concluded that his neighbors must have "turned him in," which resulted in "an effective bit of police work."

In Singapore public-health inspectors, not police officers, visit households to follow up on complaints of mosquito breeding. But we have no record of any complaint against Mr. Wrage. No health inspectors or police officers visited him, during the day or at night. I therefore wrote to ask Mr. Wrage for the date and time of the alleged visit, and the names of the officers who visited him, in order to investigate the matter. Unfortunately, he declined to substantiate his story.

Why should the police be interested in him, when he was never under any criminal investigation? It would be as much a waste of time as lunging at a lone irritating mosquito in the dark.

S. R. Nathan

*Ambassador of the Republic of Singapore
Washington, D.C.*

Stephen Wrage replies:

My little story was meant to be an amusing, perhaps indicative anecdote of life in Singapore. If Ambassador Nathan finds so much that is sinister in it, perhaps I should rethink my experience in that vigorously governed little country.

Savages and Men

It's not my policy to respond to critics, but Charles Thompson's disingenuous review of my novel *The Last of the Savages* ("Robert Penn McInerney," July *Atlantic*) demands a response. Having never read *All the King's Men*, I am at a comparative disadvantage in addressing veiled insinuations that I am somehow indebted to Penn Warren's famous novel. Friends who have read both books tell me the comparison is ludicrous. However, if Mr. Thompson's characterization of events in Penn Warren's novel is as distorted and selective as his plot

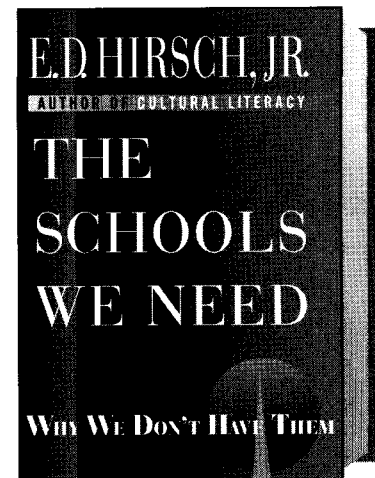
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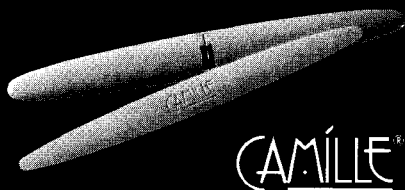
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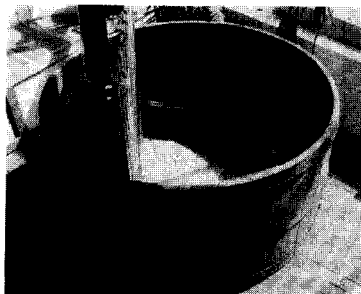
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summary of my own, then I'm not surprised at the alleged congruities; using his methods, I could make a case for sinister affinities between *Charlotte's Web* and *Ulysses*.

For the record: my protagonist, Will Savage, is a self-destructive music producer who comes from a wealthy southern dynasty and spends a third of the novel at a New England prep school. I'm told that the Huey Long-like character in *All the King's Men* comes from poor white stock and that the book follows his political "rise to power"—a phrase Thompson inappropriately applies to the development of my own hippie protagonist. Thompson's astonishment at discovering duck-hunting scenes and Civil War diaries in both books—and for the moment I have to take his word, compromised as it is, on this—suggests that he hasn't spent much time in this part of the South, and hasn't encountered many of its *other* literary artifacts. My own annual hunting trips with my in-laws to Reelfoot Lake, in Samburg, Tennessee, provide all the inspiration I need duck-hunting-wise, while the diaries were inspired by—among other sources—letters and diaries in my wife's family archives.

Thompson achieves a deadpan comic pitch of hysteria when he claims to find it especially sinister that my novel contains no mention of Penn Warren or *All the King's Men*. Neither do I mention Eudora Welty, Flannery O'Connor, Carson McCullers, John Crowe Ransom, Peter Taylor, or Leadbelly. By Thompson's logic, I would seem to be secretly indebted to all of the above by virtue of leaving them out of the book. (And why is it so significant that Penn Warren attended college in Nashville, when my novel is set in Memphis?)

Finally, it's curious to me that neither my editor, who has read *All the King's Men*, nor any of dozens of reviewers commented on these "improbable" resemblances between the two novels. Among the meager credentials in the Contributors note for Thompson is a previous assignment for *Spy* magazine; his "review" might have been amusing in that particular context. In a publication as reputable as *The Atlantic Monthly* it is alarming.

Jay McInerney
Franklin, Tenn.

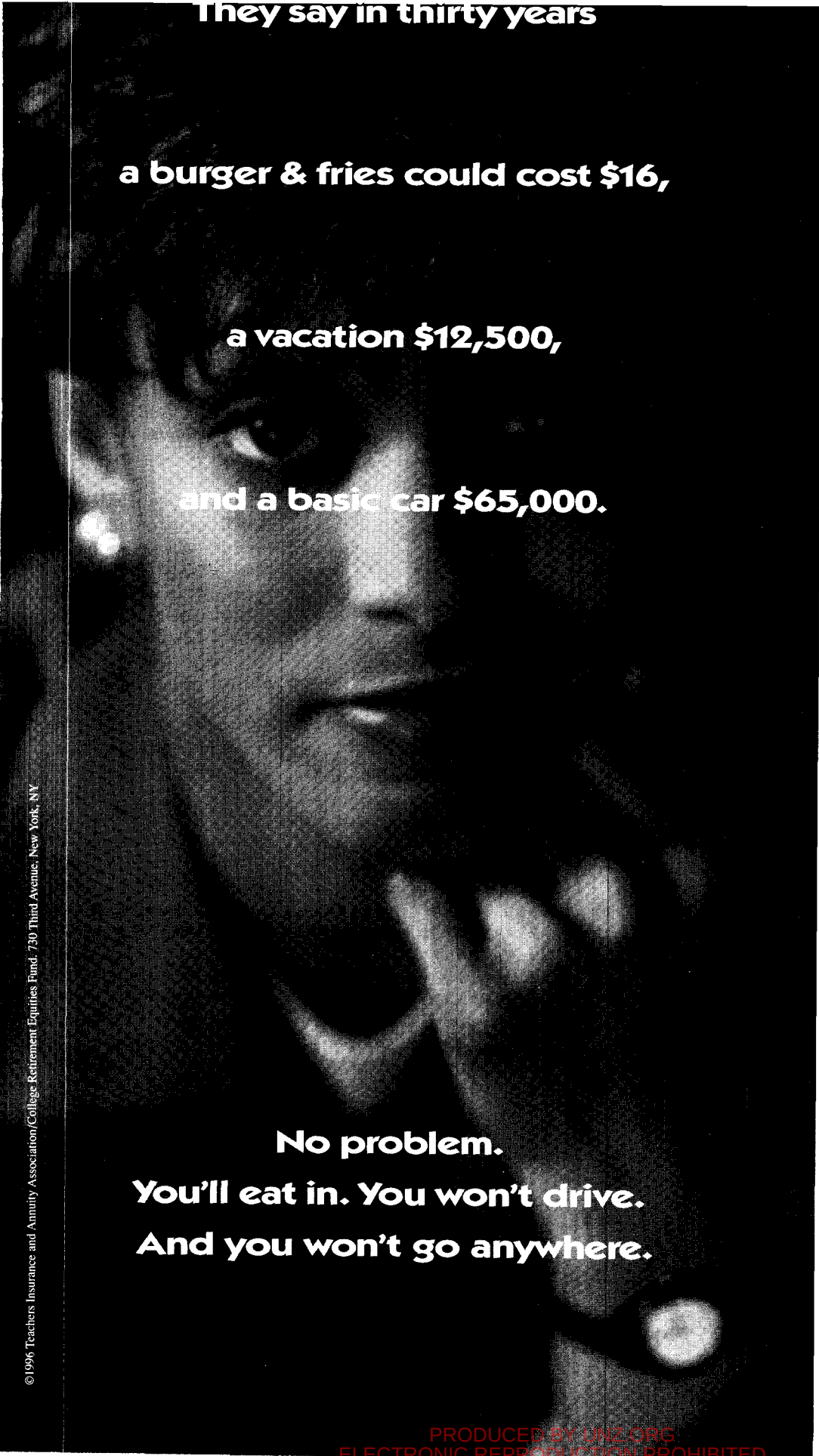
Some of my friends at *The Atlantic* asked for my reaction to the review by Charles Thompson of Jay McInerney's *The Last of the Savages*. I believe that Thompson does an injustice to McInerney by suggesting that his book was unduly influenced by Robert Penn Warren's *All the King's Men*. I've read both novels carefully, and I find no compelling evidence of a direct line of literary descent in McInerney's plot, characters, prose style, or general artistic tone and intent. Indeed, the novels offer reading experiences so utterly unlike—in terms of signature preoccupations, narrative voice, and dramatic approach—that I wondered what had possessed Thompson to bring something close to a conspiracy theorist's zeal to bear on this issue.

The two novels do share a few circumstantial similarities, as Thompson claims, most of which are either trivial (the titular hero hires an armed bodyguard) or literarily commonplace (the narrator's "story" merges with the story of the titular hero). But a couple of them—a Civil War-era diary that becomes the basis for an academic thesis by the narrator, and the titular hero's becoming the benefactor of a large hospital—do seem, on their face and completely out of context, possibly deliberate. Unfortunately, many readers of Thompson's review will never experience the context, and may unfairly conclude that McInerney has done something wrong.

Trying to prove the "influence" of one writer on another is a common critical exercise, but sometimes critics forget that writers use their imaginations to invent things, and their inventions can resemble those of other writers because we're all human and some of our experience is universal. Some of our experience is regional, too, and the literary importance of "sense of place" is well known. Given that the South is probably the most idiosyncratic and literarily worked-over region of our country, I'm surprised that Thompson didn't accord the influence of the South (where *Savages*'s dust-jacket copy says McInerney lives part-time) at least as much weight as the possible influence of Robert Penn Warren.

For the record, I have never met or communicated with Jay McInerney.

Ralph Lombreglia
Arlington, Mass.



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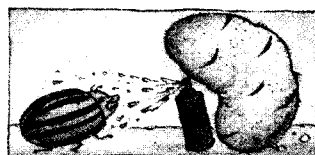
Environment

This month New York City and State officials will reveal details of a plan to close Staten Island's Fresh Kills landfill—one of the world's largest man-made structures—by 2001. The plan follows decades of debate about closing the "temporary" landfill, opened in 1948 for what was to be two or three years; at issue is where to send the 13,000 tons of garbage a day that are being deposited there. The decision to close the facility was prompted by a lawsuit threatened last spring by the president of the Staten Island borough, and filed even though the mayor and the governor had already agreed to close the site. The suit is the first ever to seek the closure of a municipal landfill for violation of the Clean Air Act (by one estimate, the 2,200-acre facility emits 5.3 million pounds of methane daily). Legal action is not the only option for dealing with the effects of landfills: the Environmental Protection Agency recently established a national program to promote the recovery, purification, and use as an energy source of landfill gas.



The Skies

October 4, Venus lies very near the bright star Regulus—part of the constellation Leo—in the eastern sky this morning, in the year's closest conjunction of a planet and a first-magnitude star. 21, the Orionid meteor shower peaks tonight; it is best seen after the waxing Moon sets, around midnight. 26, Full Moon, also known this month as the Hunter's Moon and the Moon When Water Freezes. 27, at 2:00 A.M., Daylight Saving Time ends; turn clocks back one hour.

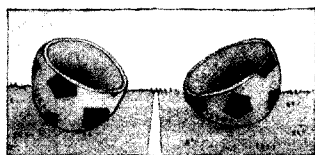


Food

This month shoppers across the country will, often unknowingly, begin buying the first big batch of genetically engineered potatoes, as two varieties of tubers manipulated to manufacture their own pesticide reach supermarket shelves; a third variety has been available in small quantities since last year. The "NewLeaf" potatoes, comprising Atlantics, Superiors, and Russet Burbanks, have been genetically modified to produce a protein that kills the Colorado potato beetle—the most destructive potato pest—and therefore can be grown using few chemical insecticides. The FDA does not require that genetically engineered products be labeled as such (genetically altered tomatoes have been marketed since 1994)—a policy that has drawn opposition from consumer groups (who are concerned, among other things, that people could develop allergies to new proteins), and from scientists, who worry, in the case of NewLeafs, that pesticide-resistant beetles may arise.

Government

October 1, by today all coeducational colleges and universities that receive federal funds must release the first of what are to be annual public reports detailing their spending on men's and women's athletics during the previous academic year, and disclosing the number of students of each sex who participated in varsity sports. The specifics of the

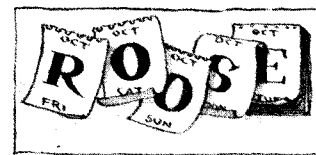


reports were mandated by the Department of Education to implement the Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act, passed in 1994 to bolster the 1972 legislation known as Title IX; Title IX outlaws sex-based discrimination in any education program receiving federal money. Sponsors of the act hope that the reports will make sex-based discrimination in athletics easier to prove in court and also prompt schools to remedy inequities on their own. Although Title IX has been given new life in recent years by a spate of successful lawsuits, the Women's Sports Foundation, a nonprofit educational organization, estimates that some 90 percent of schools are still not in compliance.



Health & Safety

Testing in animals of the final design of the first completely artificial human heart is scheduled to begin this month at three university medical centers—the Cleveland Clinic, The Pennsylvania State University, and the Texas Heart Institute. At least eight cows—animals that were chosen because their hearts and chest cavities closely resemble those of human beings—will be fitted with the devices. Researchers have been trying to create an artificial heart for more than 30 years, and partly artificial hearts have been used in patients who are awaiting heart transplants. This phase of the study is scheduled for completion in 2000, when clinical trials in human beings may begin. In the decade ahead, according to one estimate, as many as 50,000 people annually could require new hearts; only 2,000 or so donor hearts are available each year.



Arts & Letters

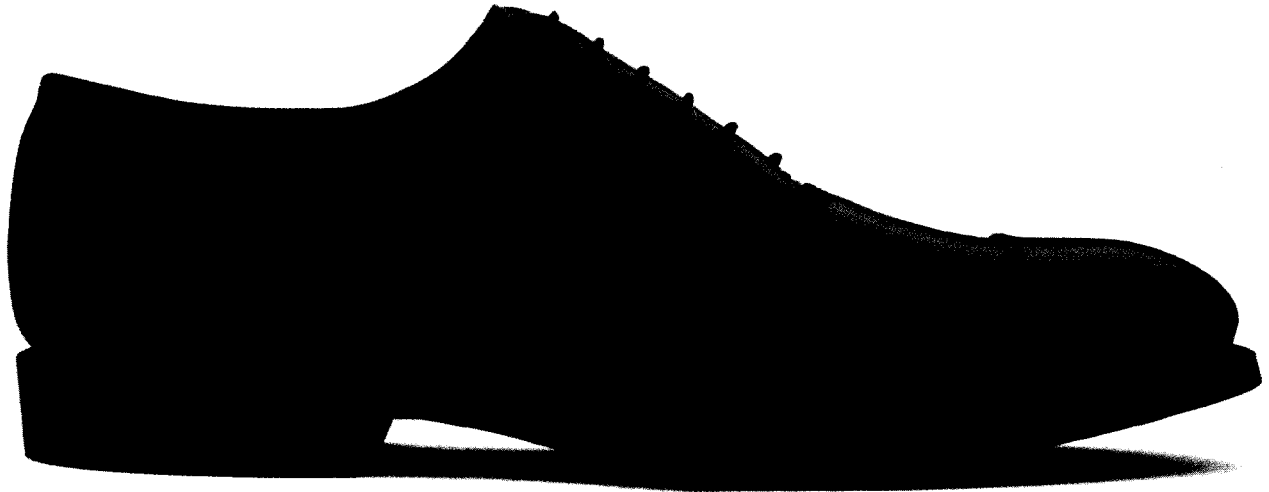
This month is Roosevelt History Month, dedicated to Franklin D. Roosevelt—the first President to be honored in this way. The commemoration was initiated by Peter Kovler, a businessman with a keen interest in Roosevelt's life and times; it was made official by a proclamation by President Bill Clinton. (October was chosen for logistical reasons, not because it had particular significance in Roosevelt's life.) More than 20 federal agencies and departments and some 30 civic and educational groups are hosting events. Highlights will include a U.S. Supreme Court lecture series on the New Deal; descriptions on the World Wide Web of the public-works projects of the era; and an exhibit at The National Archives of FDR's First Inaugural Address.

75 Years Ago

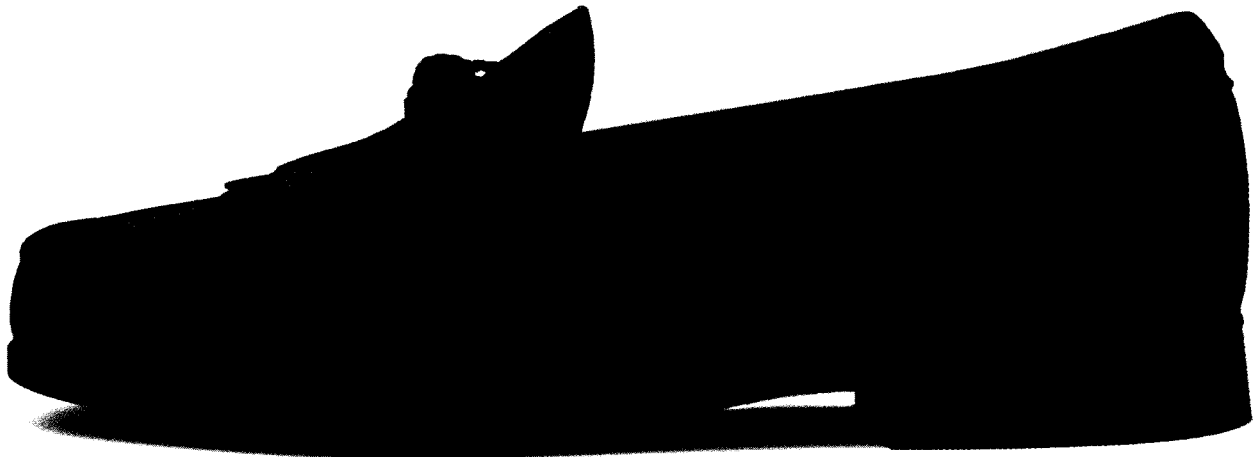
Samuel W. McCall, writing in the October, 1921, issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*: "There is probably nothing related to government that is advocated more and practised less than economy. . . . The party that is out is always bewailing the extravagance and criminal wastefulness of the party that is in. And when the people show themselves credulous enough to entrust the critics with power, the only difference likely to be seen is in an increased extravagance and waste. The fervor of the promise is usually found to be in inverse ratio to the amount of performance that is vouchsafed."



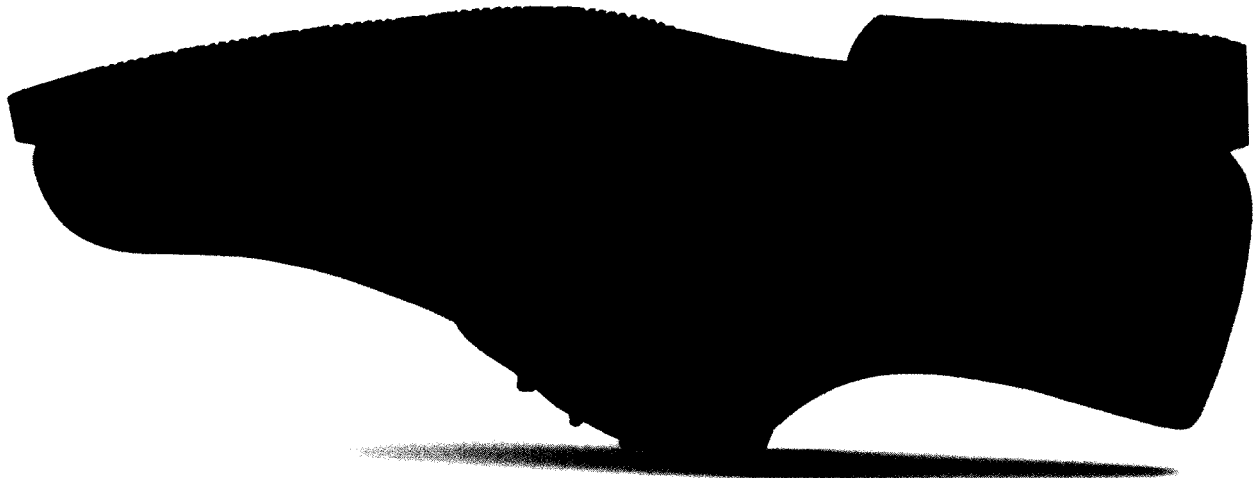
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A Talk With Bill Clinton

The President shows himself to be at once confident about what we should do to better life for the next generations and guarded about how much we can achieve toward that end

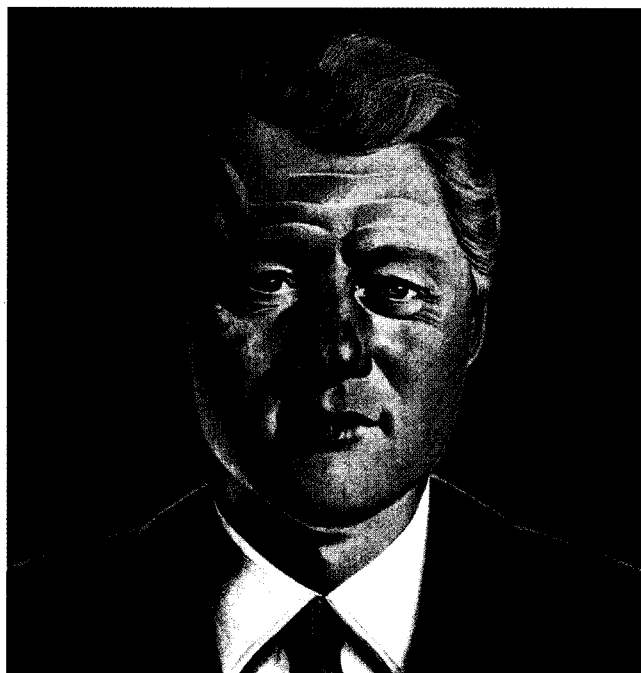
A FEW months ago editors from this magazine interviewed President Bill Clinton in the White House for just under an hour. The physical setting for dealing with a President is usually grander than that for encountering most other politicians, and theoretically calmer. The typical congressional office is cramped enough that an interviewer can hear aides yelling in the next room, "Yeah, he'll get right back to you—he'll be done with his three o'clock in a minute." The Oval Office, in contrast, is the only uncramped area in the otherwise jam-packed suite of offices in the West Wing of the White House, and one is meant upon stepping into it to be struck by its sense of space and serenity.

Any competent politician knows how to act as if the visitor of the moment were the most fascinating human specimen imaginable. But all around a President are people looking at their wrist-watches, a photographer snapping official mementos of the meeting, someone recording every word the President utters in interview situations, and a variety of other assistants whose interest in the visitor begins and ends with whether he or she will get out of there on time.

We encountered Bill Clinton at the end of a day (June 25) that was an extreme example of the meter-is-running nature of his life. Earlier Clinton had met with the Presidents of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania—an event that was no doubt front-page news in the Baltic States but was barely mentioned in the United States. Soon afterward he had a similar meeting with the President of Uzbekistan. The next morning he was scheduled to travel to France for the annual G-7 meeting of leaders of major industrial nations.

Then, around four o'clock that afternoon, news arrived of the terrorist bombing in Saudi Arabia that killed nineteen American soldiers. Through the late afternoon Clinton met to discuss the bombing with his national-security team. Shortly after six there was an announcement in the press room that the President himself—not some representative or press secretary—would make a statement. The room came alive as camera crews

checked their equipment, technicians brought in a giant lectern (which resembled a huge coffin stood on end) and hung the presidential seal on the front of it, and correspondents did teaser broadcasts to say that news was about to be made. At 6:25 a small door near the lectern opened and the President entered—along with the Vice President, the Secretary of Defense, the White House chief of staff, the national security adviser, and assorted other officials whose presence underscored the solemnity of the event. Clinton read a brief, stern statement admonishing the



terrorists, which ended "America takes care of our own. Those who did it must not go unpunished." Without taking questions he walked out of the room.

At 6:40 he walked into the Oval Office, where he found . . . us. Much like the leaders of the Baltic nations and Uzbekistan, we were hoping in the time allotted to steer

President Clinton's attention toward issues that mattered a lot to us—in this case, his views on long-term economic challenges. As Clinton sat down to talk with us, an aide handed him a sheaf of briefing papers that covered the issues we seemed likely to focus on and the themes he should stress. Clinton glanced at it for a second and set it on a table. People used to mock Ronald Rea-

by James Fallows

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gan's dictum that memos for the President should be boiled down to one page. His idea makes more sense when one sees how much time a President actually has to read and reflect.

Journalists interviewing politicians are often surprised to find that they sound smart. Politicians are made to seem buffoons when presented in television sound bites. Also, they spend much of their lives boning up on issues and explaining the positions they take—the very skills that are on display in most interviews. There are exceptions: Ronald Reagan, Gerald Ford, and Edward Kennedy have been known for coming across in conversation as affable rather than insightful—to say nothing of Dan Quayle. But politicians as varied as Richard Nixon, Jimmy Carter, Newt Gingrich, and Lyndon Johnson all got ahead partly by persuading people in

Clinton was most animated in talking of similarities and differences between this turn of the century and the last one.

small groups that they were figures of complexity and depth.

Bill Clinton has this skill. During the first ten or fifteen minutes of our interview he seemed logy and understandably preoccupied. But when we went back and read it on paper, even that part of his conversation was surprisingly coherent; and after he woke up, he had the sort of zip usually associated with his informal TV appearances. By the end of the interview, when we had turned off the tape recorders and were being given the evil eye by staffers and Secret Service agents, he was in his familiar buttonholing mode, standing a little closer than other people do, looming over us with his size and heft and almost but not quite putting his hands on our shoulders—in general, being the complete communicator.

■ ■ ■

The substance of Clinton's comments was not quite as reassuring and upbeat as his manner, or as politicians are ultimately required to seem. He talked in detailed and enthusiastic terms about steps he thought would help the country weather its upcoming economic transition—brought about by the global economy, the rise of computers, the ever-growing gap between rewards for highly skilled and for unskilled workers. But beneath his action plan seemed to be a fatalistic awareness that this transition would be wrenching, like the one a century ago that accompanied the rise of unions and mass production. Like Newt Gingrich or Jack Kemp, Clinton is brimming with specific policy ideas. But Gingrich and Kemp suggest, in tone more than in words, that once their reforms—tax cuts, empowerment zones—are in place, everything will be great. Clinton's implied argument, more appealing to a historian's or a journalist's sensibilities, is that things never work out perfectly, but modest changes can make a difference in the long run.

On only two issues did Clinton give answers that were either artfully evasive or simply conventional. The evasion concerned, of course, Social Security. The question was not whether the program costs too much or gives too many of its benefits to people who don't need them. Rather, it was whether the payroll tax that funds Social Security has become another source of economic unfairness in America, taking as it does the biggest tax bite, proportionally, from the people with the lowest incomes.

Clinton dealt with this in a way that avoided the flat-earthism of saying that nothing is wrong with Social Security without being suicidally specific about exactly what should be done. He said, "What I think about Social Security is that we've always done whatever it took to preserve the program in a way that was healthy for the economy. We've always done it in a bipartisan fashion." The vehicle for doing so, he made clear, was a bipartisan commission that would give both parties cover for doing what had to be done—just what happened in 1983, when the previous set of Social Security changes was passed.

Clinton's conventional answer concerned budget deficits. Since the day he took office, they have blighted his life.

Having run in 1992 on a two-part economic platform—cutting spending in general and raising some taxes to reduce the deficit, while increasing spending for education, job training, public works, and other "investment" accounts—Clinton discovered during his first year in office that fighting the deficit was driving out nearly every other goal. (The logic ran like this: bigger deficits might cause inflation; fear of inflation would cause the Federal Reserve to raise interest rates; fear of high interest rates would cause the bond and stock markets to crash; fear of these crashes made the Clinton Administration drop most of its investment agenda.) After Republicans took control of Congress last year, they tried to push through budget plans and constitutional amendments requiring that the budget deficit shrink to zero within seven years. These efforts failed—but the trend of budget deficits nonetheless changed dramatically during Clinton's term. Relatively speaking, U.S. deficits in the late 1980s were the largest among all industrial nations. Now they are the smallest. Some economists therefore argue—as Thomas I. Palley and Robert A. Levine did in the July *Atlantic*—that a continued effort to eliminate the deficit has become more dangerous than the deficit itself, and that America could again make Herbert Hoover's error of holding down spending when spending could produce growth.

"I basically don't agree with those economists, frankly," Clinton said when asked about this theory. "You could argue that the problem is solved. We have an operating surplus—our budget would have been in balance the past two years, with a surplus, were it not for the interest on the debt run up in the twelve years before I took office." But, he added half sincerely, "there is no point in crying over spilled milk." It is still important to keep the deficit down, so that interest rates will remain low and the private economy can create as many jobs as possible. This, he said, will do more good for more working Americans than would government spending or even tax cuts, which could raise the deficit.

■ ■ ■

The subjects that made the President animated involved the long-term economic trends with which the victor in this election—and the victors in the next

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few presidential elections—will have to cope. One of these is the continuing polarization of both American society and the American economy. When running in 1992 Clinton constantly pointed out that the rich were getting richer, the poor were getting poorer, and the middle class was melting away. Since America didn't have "a person to spare," he said, it was crucial to redirect economic and educational forces so that more people would have a fair chance to compete. Yet during his time in office the polarization has continued. We asked whether anything could stop it—in particular, the education and job-training programs he seemed to present almost as a panacea for any undesirable consequences of world economic trends.

Clinton's answers were both activist and, again, fatalistic. When asked whether an emphasis on education would lead

have the right sort of economic strategy—pro-growth, pro-jobs strategy—you can at least give real growth to people in the middle and below." As for inequality in the longer run, he said, "Now, on the education thing, the reason I tell you I don't know is because I don't think we've done enough to know that. For example, a lot of these benefits from education come in the form not only of individual opportunities but also of increasing productivity, and that takes place over a long period of time. But I do believe we could get some rapid gains for the bottom half of the wage [distribution], maybe for the bottom sixty percent, if we could accelerate things like the passage of the GI Bill for America's workers, which I have been proposing for a long time, so that every worker would in effect have an account with the federal government. Instead of having to figure out which of seventy programs you might be qualified for, you just get a voucher if you're unemployed or underemployed that you can take to a training facility.

"Also, I assume we'll have to wait beyond the election, but if we can make the thirteenth and fourteenth years of education in effect as universal as high school education is today, I think that would make a profound difference. And if we started by getting people who are in the work force now to come back and do this, with the tax-credit proposal, I think the likelihood that those people's incomes would go up is very, very high. These community colleges are almost infinitely expandable, you know, and they are by definition related to the emerging economies in the areas they serve."

Clinton also talked at length about the importance of "democratizing technology"—essentially, making sure that computers and similar advances are made available to the broadest possible group of Americans, rather than becoming another means of enriching the rich. Showing his usual love of examples drawn from recent travels, he described a computer project he had seen in Union City, New Jersey. The students at this school come mainly from immigrant families with per capita incomes well below the state average. The school system put computer equipment donated by Bell Atlantic in parents' homes and trained them to use the software, largely for

communication. "You had first-generation immigrant parents with their children learning to E-mail the principal and the teachers and find out how the kids were doing," Clinton said. "Two years later this school has an attendance rate that is better than the state average and test scores above the state average in one of the wealthiest states in America. That has to have an impact on the earnings prospects for those young people. If that will work for children, the same thing will work for adults."

It is very difficult to imagine Bob Dole talking in comparable detail about the factors that determine economic growth and inequality. The economic policy Dole embraced just before he selected Jack Kemp as his running mate—a 15 percent tax cut across the board—grows straight from the supply-side belief that politicians should not discuss economic details at all but should concentrate on cutting taxes. Clinton's economic perspective differs sharply from that of classic Republican supply-siders like Phil Gramm and Steve Forbes, or of techno-optimists like Newt Gingrich and John Naisbitt. Clinton's has a tragic element: economic change could create victims and leave people behind, rather than lifting every boat on a rising tide. Yet Clinton's prescriptions, as he discussed them with us, had a surprisingly Benjamin Franklinesque emphasis on individual self-help. Making health coverage and pensions transportable from job to job will help people who already have an investment in today's system, but will do little for the growing army of part-time workers and those too badly educated to seem employable at all. Nevertheless, vouchers for training programs will help workers with gumption, and the emphasis on community colleges may be more important for U.S. productivity than the traditional stress on big-time research institutions: community colleges are where the vaunted retraining of the work force can take place.

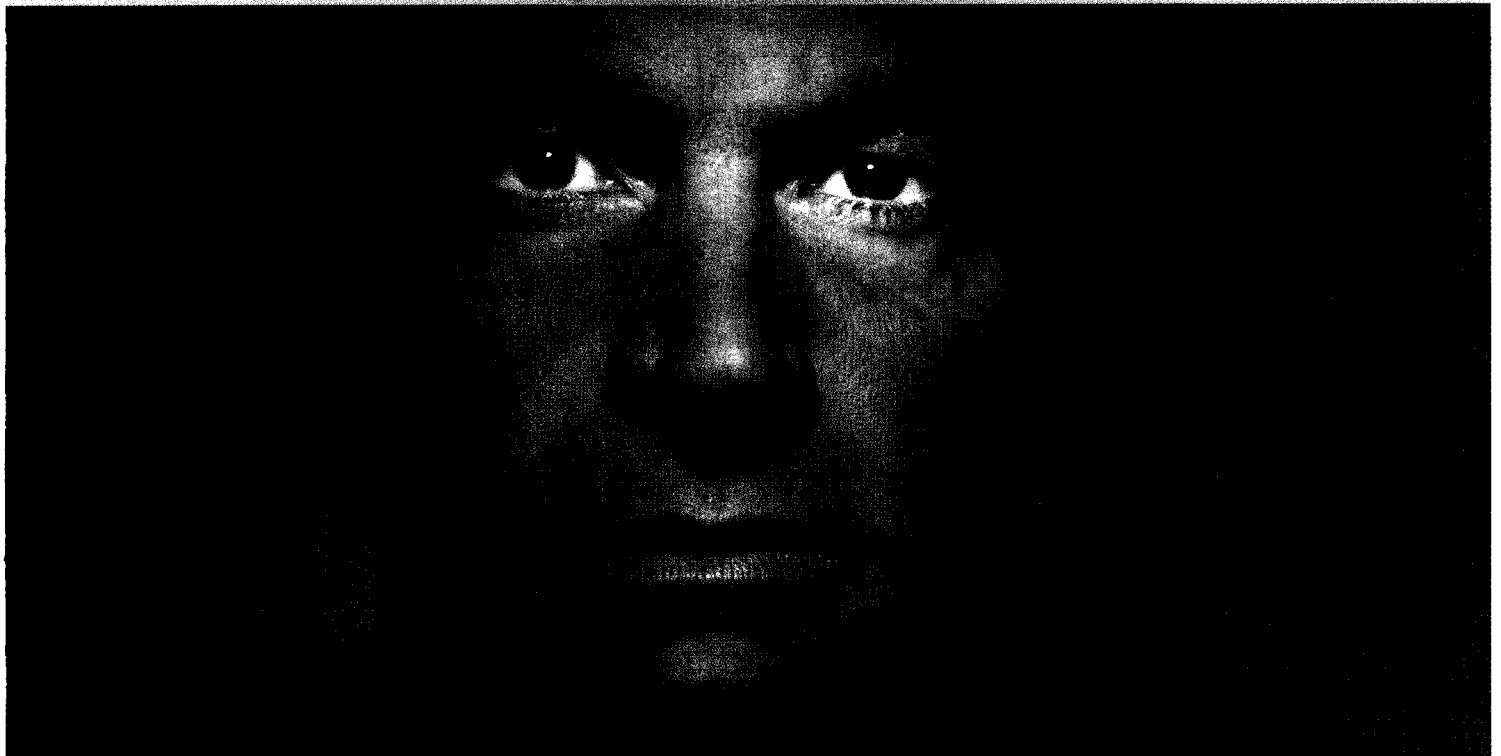
Unlike, say, Pat Buchanan, Clinton did not sound as if the United States had a choice about being changed by the global economy. "We don't want to get into a position where we are trying to guarantee the preservation of the past," he said. "That's what President Chirac's trying to deal with in France." In France, Clinton pointed out, overall growth has

On the economy: "We don't want to get into a position where we are trying to guarantee the preservation of the past."

to a more equal society, he said, "The truth is, no one knows the answer to that." In one modest way, he said, the trend toward inequality had been corrected: the income of the poorest 20 percent of Americans had recently begun to rise, rather than actually falling, as it had for the previous fifteen years. (This, he said, was owing mainly to the budget plan he proposed in 1993, which roughly doubled the Earned Income Tax Credit—a kind of income-tax rebate for low-income workers.) "The inequality is still pronounced and increasing," he said, "because [incomes] in the upper twenty percent, and indeed the upper five percent and the upper one percent, are growing even faster than those in the middle and at the bottom. But at least [incomes at the bottom] are starting to grow again. So that suggests that if you

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-James Nachtwey, photojournalist.



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surged for the past three years, but the unemployment rate has stuck at 12 percent, "because in effect they have tried to guarantee a social safety net that doesn't fit with the vibrancy and the dynamism of the world. There has always been some churning in this economy. There's always been some vibrancy in it, and some winners and losers. We shouldn't be trying to freeze the past, but we should be trying to ease people's path to another future."

"Ease"—not "ensure" or "promise" or "preserve." It is a longer-term, more modest, and probably more realistic prospect than he offered four years ago.

■ ■ ■

The other main theme in the discussion was the interaction among energy use, global environmental effects, and long-term economic growth. During the 1992 campaign Clinton never managed

nese into the automobile age will have on air quality and energy supply.

As a starting point, he said, "in the next four years we ought to do more in research generally"—a significant view, in light of Congress's attempt to shrink the federal research budget. "We ought to do more in biomedical research, both through public spending and through continued efforts to reform the FDA and accelerate the right kind of movement of biomedical products to the market. I think we ought to do more in energy and environmental research—much more. I believe that if we don't do this, if we don't find some technological fixes that make the energy we have go further and also do less damage in terms of greenhouse gases, we're going to pay a significant price. We're way underinvesting in research and technology, I believe."

Clinton said that he did not think the United States or the world faces an impending energy shortage, mainly because in this country and elsewhere there are still "vast resources of natural gas, which the market so far has kept at such low prices that a lot of it hasn't been recovered." But in the long run, he said, it will be important both to develop energy supplies and to improve conservation techniques, so as to "guarantee that Americans will have the energy they need and the world will be able to breathe its air."

Clinton said that he will try to make the case for "a dramatic increase" in research spending by "elevating the argument that I've been making that economics is a part of our national security." The classic example of this strategy is Dwight Eisenhower's promotion of federal aid to schools and a new national road system in the guise of national defense. "Whether I can be as successful in doing that as President Eisenhower was in saying, 'Look, we've got to have an interstate highway system, because it takes the army too long to go from one coast to the other,' remains to be seen," Clinton said. "But I believe that we can. I'm certainly going to try."

If he is re-elected, Clinton's attempts to make this argument may demand a further refinement in his skills and strategic view. He was at his most animated near the end of our discussion, in talking of similarities and differences between this turn of the century and the

one a hundred years ago. Labor turmoil, boom-and-bust economies, ethnic changes wrought by immigration, and other shocks of that era eventually gave rise to the Progressive movement. One could make a very compelling case, Clinton said, that the aftershocks from the previous turn of the century reached beyond the New Deal and the Second World War, so that the economic reforms of the Progressive era were consolidated in a panoply of labor-relations laws and the growth of an education and research establishment, symbolized by the GI Bill and the post-*Sputnik* research boom.

"This era is analogous to that era in the following ways," he said. "We're changing our industrial paradigm—we're going from the industrial age to an information-technology age, from the Cold War to a global society. That paradigm change has brought enormous changes in the way people work and live. It is attended by a large increase in immigration and an increasing diversity in America, with all the tensions that that brings. There are vast fortunes being made—people are having opportunities they never dreamed of. But a lot of people have been dislocated."

The difference between the eras, he said, is that America's middle class is now larger and is protected by an extensive social safety net. And "it is not as clear to people that there is a single law that the government in Washington can pass that will make everything all right. But if we do the right things, and we stay at it with a consistency and a discipline over a period of years, I think we have a chance to go through this transformation with less disruption than we had then, and more quickly—*more* quickly, not quickly."

At the end of the hour it was clear that the President thought he had answers to some of the country's basic economic questions. But even if his answers are the right ones, will he be able to explain them to the public? Can he persuade Congress, voters, taxpayers, to go along? When asked how he could rhetorically prepare the country to "stay at it" and "do the right things" to manage these transformations, the President said little beyond that he would do his best but didn't have a clue. We may see him continue to learn on the job. ☞

*Clinton's comments
were not quite as
reassuring and upbeat
as his manner, or as
politicians are ultimately
required to seem.*

to portray himself as the environmentalist in the race. In the Democratic primaries Paul Tsongas recommended an energy-conserving gasoline tax, which Clinton opposed. In the general election Clinton had to fend off George Bush's attacks on his environmental record in Arkansas, and he always looked less ecologically aware than his running mate, Al Gore. But after last year's Republican Congress took what proved to be an unpopular stance against environmental regulation, environmental protection became an important distinguishing theme for the Democrats. In environmental matters as in economics, the President argued, the country should start dealing now with international problems that will become acute if they are ignored—for example, the impact that bringing more than a billion Chi-

Rob Fleisher, Santa Barbara, California.

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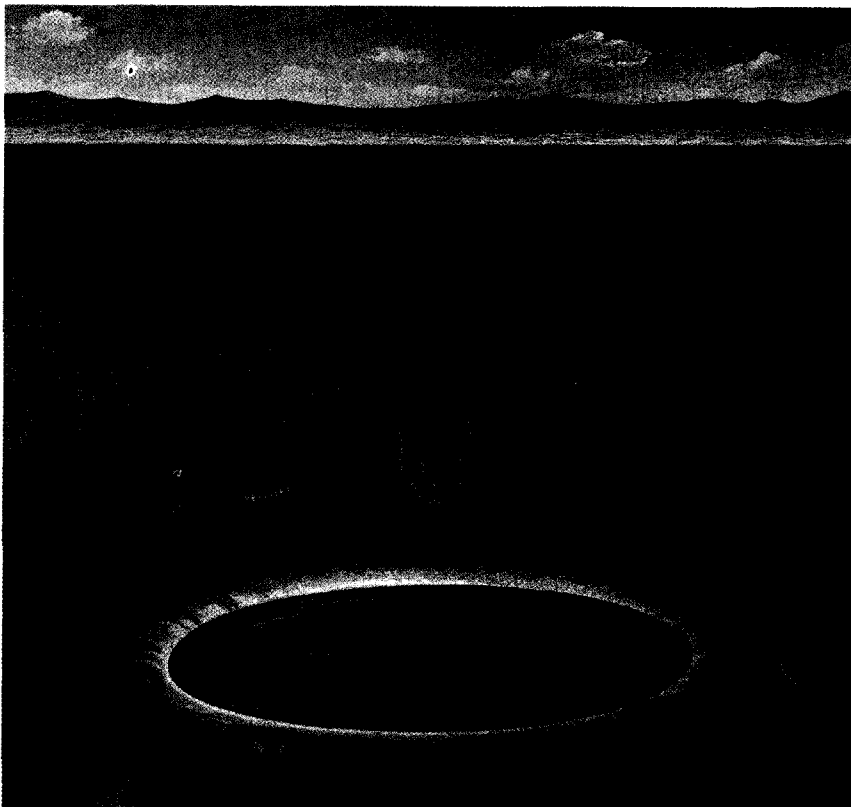
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The Sub-Seabed Solution

Far from being embraced, a promising solution to the radioactive-waste problem faces stiff opposition from the federal government, the nuclear industry, and environmental interests

IN 1976 a giant coring device mounted to a ship plunged repeatedly into the bottom of the Pacific Ocean, three miles below the surface, bringing up 100-foot-long tubes of mud and clay with the consistency of peanut butter. The primeval muck told a tale of geologic serenity. Sediment records from the cores indicate that the region—roughly 600 miles north of Hawaii and spanning an area four times the size of

Texas—has been tranquil for 65 million years, unperturbed by volcanic activity or by shifting of the earth's tectonic plates. Charles Hollister, a geologist and senior scientist at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, saw even more when he gazed at the thick dark ooze. He saw what might prove to be the perfect place to sequester our high-level nuclear waste—the most potent and intensely radioactive by-

products of military or civilian enterprise.

It's an intriguing vision, and one that in principle still holds great promise. Yet the concept of "sub-seabed disposal," first suggested by Hollister in 1973, has been undercut by a series of political blunders. A decision later this fall at a meeting in London sponsored by the International Maritime Organization, and a bill before Congress at this writing, may kill the idea—possibly the best solution yet advanced to the nuclear-waste problem—before society has had a chance to judge its true potential.

Hollister first hit upon the notion of sub-seabed burial twenty-three years ago, at a small social gathering in Washington, D.C. There he met William Bishop, a chemist at the Sandia National Laboratories, in New Mexico, who described the problems associated with a proposed nuclear-waste repository in Lyons, Kansas. "I immediately thought of the clays in the deep-sea floor, which I knew, from previous studies, clung tenaciously to the radioactive particles that had settled there as a result of atmospheric nuclear testing," Hollister recalls. He and Bishop stayed up all night discussing the idea, and a month later Hollister made a pitch to officials at Sandia, whose interest was piqued.

Next Hollister brought biologists, physicists, and oceanographers to Sandia to see if they could "destroy" the idea in what he calls the "biggest shootout since the OK Corral." He says, "If we could find out it was a stupid idea at the outset, it would save us a lot of time and money." But rather than shooting down the concept, many of the scientists told Hollister they'd like to work with him on it. A sub-seabed research program was initiated in 1974, with financial backing from Sandia; within a few years it had grown into an international effort involving ten countries and 200 scientists, under the auspices of the Paris-based Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. This collaboration led to the core-sampling expedition that demonstrated the stability of the region underlying the North Pacific floor. Hollister points out that the Pacific site he and his colleagues explored twenty years ago is not unusual, geologically speak-

by **Steven Nadis**

Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, saw



The day the nurse
handed him to me
I got serious about life.
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balance a budget,
and travel every week.
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The mud and clays of the mid-ocean basins may provide the best burial grounds for nuclear waste.

ing. "About a quarter of this planet is covered with geology that is appropriate for this solution," he says.

Experiments conducted by this international team of scientists from 1974 to 1986 support Hollister's opinion that the sticky mud and clays that blanket the mid-ocean basins may provide the best burial grounds yet proposed for nuclear waste. These tests suggest that if waste canisters were deposited just ten meters below the ocean floor, any toxic substances that leaked out would be bound up by the clays for millions of years. Deeper interment, at 100 meters or more, could easily be managed, providing an even greater margin of safety. "The stuff sticks to the mud and sits there like heavy lead," Hollister maintains. "Nothing's going to bring it into the biosphere, unless we figure out how to reverse gravity."

If he's right, and the proposed technique could end the worldwide radioactive-waste problem that has been building up for the past fifty years, why has almost nobody in this country heard about it? The answer to this question—along with the roots of many of the problems plaguing current U.S. nuclear-waste-disposal efforts—can be traced to a 1986 decision by the Department of Energy which cut off research funds for sub-seabed and other disposal alternatives, so that the agency could focus exclusively on developing a land-based geologic repository for high-level wastes; a year later it settled on Yucca Mountain, Nevada. The timing was unfortunate: ongoing sub-seabed experiments were canceled in spite of encouraging results and after much experimental apparatus had already been built.

The federal government had a change of heart in 1987, when Congress passed amendments to the Nuclear Waste Policy Act which, among other things, established the Office of Subseabed Disposal Research within the DOE. The director

of this office, Walter L. Warnick, was asked to create a consortium of university investigators and devise a long-range research plan. But a couple of months after Warnick had enthusiastically begun, the congressional committee that controlled appropriations strongly discouraged the Energy Department from spending any money on the program. With access to sub-seabed research funds blocked, Warnick shifted his attention to acid rain and global-warming issues. The Office of Subseabed Disposal existed in name only until this year, when it was abolished altogether.

Warnick was disappointed by the final decision, although he recognizes that it was effectively made about a decade ago, when the DOE and Congress chose the Yucca Mountain alternative and "put all their eggs in that basket." The judgment, he adds, was made on pragmatic, rather than technical, grounds. "It merely reflected the feeling that land-based-disposal technology was more advanced at the time." But from a technological point of view, he says, "sub-seabed disposal is a fascinating concept that offers many advantages, perhaps the foremost being that wastes would be deposited at some of the most geologically stable places on earth." What's more, "all the research that has been done on this option since 1974 points to no insurmountable obstacles"—an assessment, Warnick says, that is widely accepted within the Energy Department.

The sub-seabed approach has been the subject of peer-reviewed research, and the program generated dozens of articles in prominent international scientific journals. Henry Kendall—a Nobel laureate in physics, a professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and the chairman of the Union of Concerned Scientists—calls sub-seabed disposal a "sweet solution" and a "winner," labeling it the best of the alternatives from a technical standpoint. A National Academy of Sciences panel called for further study of the sub-seabed approach, and a report last year by Robert Klett, a systems analyst at Sandia, concluded that "[all] analyses to date indicate that sub-seabed disposal would be a safe and economical method of [high-level waste] disposal and that predictions could be made with a high degree of confidence." In light of these endorsements, why isn't the idea being pursued, if only

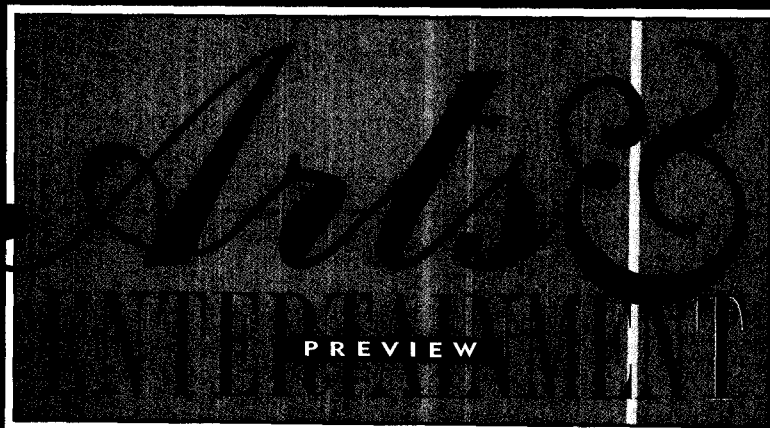
through research? Why won't this country make the modest investment—about ten years and \$250 million, according to Hollister—required to find out if it would really work?

THE reasons are varied, though they are woven together in a familiar pattern. The Department of Energy killed the program partly for political reasons and partly because the sub-seabed researchers never really fit in with mainstream DOE culture. "It was a clear case of 'not invented here,'" Hollister says. Many environmentalists—acting as narrow-mindedly as their traditional opponents in government and the nuclear industry—dismissed the idea before learning the details, assuming that the approach involved little more than wholesale ocean dumping. The nuclear utilities lobbied against it for pecuniary reasons: the waste-disposal effort is largely subsidized by a tax on nuclear-generated electricity that the utilities have been paying (they pass the cost on to consumers) since 1982, and they have seen little tangible return on their \$12 billion investment. Industry officials—concerned that the DOE would be unable to meet its obligation to start accepting nuclear waste by 1998—surmised that the sooner the Yucca Mountain facility opened, the sooner they could divest themselves of their spent nuclear fuel and the waste issue in general. "Their position was extremely superficial," says John Kelly, who heads JK Research Associates, a consulting firm specializing in nuclear- and hazardous-waste disposal issues. "They decided the only way to succeed in building a repository in Nevada was to cut off all alternatives." This position was shared by Louisiana Senator J. Bennett Johnston, then the chairman of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee and a leading opponent of sub-seabed disposal.

The shortcomings of the resultant program are now widely apparent. After spending almost \$2 billion on technical studies and preliminary excavation at Yucca Mountain, the DOE still hasn't demonstrated the geologic suitability of the site. The mountain lies near active seismic faults and a volcano that erupted less than 10,000 years ago. There is concern that the water table beneath the proposed burial grounds could rise and

(Continued on page 38)

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BY BOB BLUMENTHAL AND CHARLES M. YOUNG

JOE'S SMALL WORLD

No other European musician has made a greater impact on the direction of jazz than Joe Zawinul. The Vienna-born pianist began playing an electric keyboard in 1966, which led to much more than his own jazz-funk compositions (including "Mercy, Mercy, Mercy"), the electric metamorphosis of Miles Davis (announced by the Zawinul composition "In a Silent Way"), and the ultimate fusion band, Weather Report. It created popular and universal options for incorporating sounds, textures, and the influences of diverse cultures.

Zawinul's lower profile in America since Weather Report disbanded, in 1985, should be history after his recent flurry of activity.

Stories of the Danube (Philips), a work in seven movements for symphony orchestra and soloists, is an appropriately majestic symphony that follows the river on a multicultural journey. After the orchestra boldly develops folk and classical

themes for three movements, Amit Chatterjee's guitar and voice introduce "Gypsy," a retitled jazz line from Zawinul's early electric period. *Stories* then proceeds to blend ethnic, jazz, and classical elements. The Danube becomes a melting pot, a Mississippi East for musical crossbreeding.

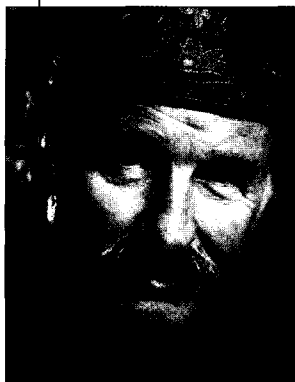
The same "small world" approach drives *My People* (Escapade), featuring the Zawinul Syndicate combo and such vocalists and musicians as Chatterjee; Salif Keita, from Mali; and Thania Sanchez, from Venezuela. Zawinul moves among keyboards, pepe (a wind-driven synthesizer), acoustic guitar, and his own vocals, creating a universal stew in which improvisation is just one ingredient. The danceable results are less unified than *Stories*, but they reinforce Zawinul's orchestral command of the electronic palette.

—B.B.

Bob Blumenthal is a jazz critic for The Boston Globe.

Charles M. Young reviews popular music for Playboy, Musician, and other publications.

JOHN RAE



Joe Zawinul

A VOICE TEMPERED BY THE BLUES

Maybe it's just the second-hand cigarette smoke he's been breathing in blues clubs over the decades—and maybe it's accumulated wisdom. Whichever, James Cotton at the age of sixty-one has a riveting rasp of authority in his voice that is almost never

on television or the radio. Unless you see him live, you'll have to buy *Deep in the Blues* (Gitanes/Verve) if you want to hear it, and you will want to hear it if you have any taste at all for the blues. It should make a lot of the genre's top-ten lists for the year. Known since the fifties for his virtuosity with the harmonica, Cotton feels no need to bury his phrasing under pounding drums and overdriven electric guitars. Accompanied only by the bassist Charlie Ha-



Harmonica legend James Cotton

den and the guitarist Joe Louis Walker, with an occasional appearance by Dave Maxwell on piano, Cotton leaves a lot of air in the music, letting the warm tones in the wood of the acoustic instruments resonate while his blues harp adds an element of sass to the contemplative atmosphere. This quiet intensity suits the subject matter, which ranges from satisfaction at outliving a treacherous lover ("Down at Your Buryin'") to being a treacherous lover oneself ("Two Trains Runnin'"), but the subject matter really isn't the point. The point is these guys know the blues thoroughly; they play with both emotion and perspective, and without a lot of bombast or even a single extraneous note. Cotton is touring with his band. Buy your tickets early. —C.M.Y.

TIM MOSENFELDER

THE ARIZONA DESERT UNVEILED

After ten years of living in a warehouse in Los Angeles, Bruce Licher pulled the plug on his punk/noise band Savage Republic and moved his graphic-design and printing business to Sedona, Arizona. The desert inspired him to found a new band, called Scenic—aptly named, because you can see the desert vistas when you listen to its first album, *Incident at Cima* (Independent Project Records). You can see them some more on Scenic's second and latest album, *Acquatica* (World Domination/IPR), the perfect soundtrack for having visions while staring at the stars in a clear night sky. It's also the perfect soundtrack for shooting outlaws who don't shave often enough, for hang-

gliding, for searching out Yaqui Indian sorcerers, and for doing your taxes (on the theory that it will ease the pain of doing them). Licher favors guitars that chime with a little echo for the mystical understatement, but he's not afraid to mess around with dulcimers, various woodwinds, and sound effects to explore a melodic idea. Unlike most New Age musicians, he has lots of melodic ideas that move dramatically from one place to another. And unlike that strange new genre of symphonic schmaltz that appears on PBS when the network wants to raise money (Yanni, John Tesh), Licher's music is never inane. So be not afraid when you buy it: no one will accuse you of being unhip.

—C.M.Y.

Inspired by the landscape: Scenic's Bruce Licher, Brock Wirtz, and James Brenner



JAY DUNN

Classical Music

BY AUSTIN BAER

RIVER OF DESIRE

The Teatro Amazonas . . . magic clings to the very name. In steamy Manaus, a few degrees south of the Equator, 900 miles up the Amazon from the Atlantic, the ornate opera house reflects the social pretensions and showy tastes of the Brazilian rubber barons whose fortunes skyrocketed in the 1890s. No one who has ever spent weeks rapt in the teeming dreamworld of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* or the heartsick nightmare of *Love in the Time of Cholera* can imagine an author more attuned to that place and period than Gabriel García Márquez. Lo and behold, it has inspired his first libretto. (The chore of actually writing the words in the end fell to a hand-picked amanuensis.) The Nobel laureate might have recycled some episode from his existing trove of story, but he has done opera the honor of working from scratch. *Florencia en el Amazonas*, receiving its world premiere at the Houston Grand Opera (October 25–November 9; 713-227-



Costume designs

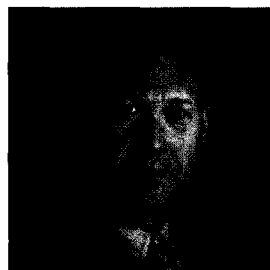
2787), centers on an opera singer who is making her way up Brazil's mighty river. Her apparent purpose is to fulfill a professional engagement in Manaus. But what secretly propels her is the desire to be reunited with the love of her life, a man who vanished into these jungles twenty years ago, in quest of the rarest of butterflies. Memory, mystery, obsession—these are prime ingredients for the cocktail that is an opera. The fine-boned soprano Sheri Greenawald, both elegant and passionate, should prove a captivating protagonist. The director, Francesca Zambello, may be depended on for an enthralling show. The wild card is the Spanish-Mexican composer Daniel Catán, whose score will determine in the end whether *Florencia* sings.

Some say that the vocal recital in America is on the verge of extinction. New York tells a different story. This month both Carnegie Hall (212-247-7800) and Lincoln Center (212-721-6500) kick off series devoted to the intimate, challenging, infinitely rewarding art of the song. In Carnegie's main hall the Welshman Bryn Terfel—great of heart and voice—leads the cavalcade of big names presumed capable of filling the 2,804 seats in that cavernous temple: Waltraud Meier, Kathleen Battle, Thomas Hampson, Jessye Norman, and Dawn Upshaw. Upstairs, Carnegie's Weill Recital Hall (268 seats) features debuts by Stanford Olsen, Andreas Schmidt, Michelle DeYoung, and Jard van Nes, artists whom connoisseurs will appreciate the chance to know better. Meanwhile, Lincoln Center offers a congregation of songsters that is even ampler and for the most part fresher. Cecilia Bartoli is the only surefire box-office name in the bunch, but Alice Tully Hall, with its 1,096

seats, presents a reasonably manageable marketing challenge—besides being a setting in which a true communicator shines.



Jennifer Larmore
Sergei Leiferkus



The Russian Sergei Leiferkus, a mesmerizing storyteller, leads this month, to be followed by his gleaming compatriot Galina Gorchakova; the vivacious Americans Jennifer Larmore, Susan Graham, and Ruth Anne Swenson; and the polished Scandinavians Bo Skovhus (who might have stepped from the pages of *GQ*) and Håkan Hagegård (who presides with the ease of the host of a country estate). A complementary series at Lincoln Center's Walter Reade Theater (268 seats) introduces four new names who are setting insiders abuzz: the Irish baritone Simon Keenlyside, the brilliant American countertenor David Daniels, the bright Irish soprano Frances Lucy, and Nancy Maultsby,

a plummy American contralto. "Our audience," says Lincoln Center's vice president for programming, Jane Moss, "is loyal and knowledgeable and has a very large appetite."

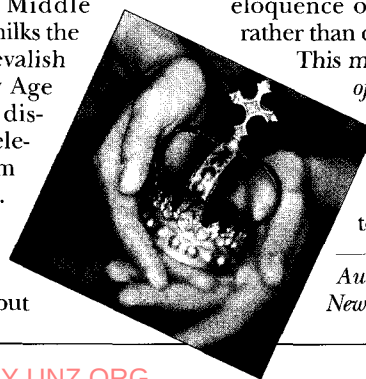
A SOUNDTRACK FOR SAINT JOAN

The composer Richard Einhorn likens his first encounter with Carl Dreyer's silent film *The Passion of Joan of Arc* to a chance discovery of the Taj Mahal. Six years later Einhorn produced his own "meditation" on the warlike virgin. The oratorio *Voices of Light*, for voices and amplified instrumental ensemble, is set to a patchwork of medieval texts in various languages (no English—not even Middle English). The music milks the medieval and medievalish strains that the New Age finds so congenial, discreetly blending in elements of minimalism for good measure. *Voices* can stand alone (the recording on Sony Classical has been selling briskly), but

since its premiere, in 1994, its principal exposure has come with screenings of Dreyer's classic account of Joan's trial, to which it provides an atmospheric, rather lulling accompaniment. Silent films, even the masterpieces, cry out for music, and *Voices* serves *The Passion* well. Wisely, Einhorn leaves unattempted the impossible task of finding musical "equivalents" for Dreyer's camera work or the mute eloquence of the riveting performers; rather than dramatize, he sheds an aura.

This month the multimedia *Voices of Light* travels to major concert venues in Costa Mesa, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Tucson, Tempe, Atlanta, Savannah, and Charleston (see local listings).

Austin Baer is a writer based in New York.



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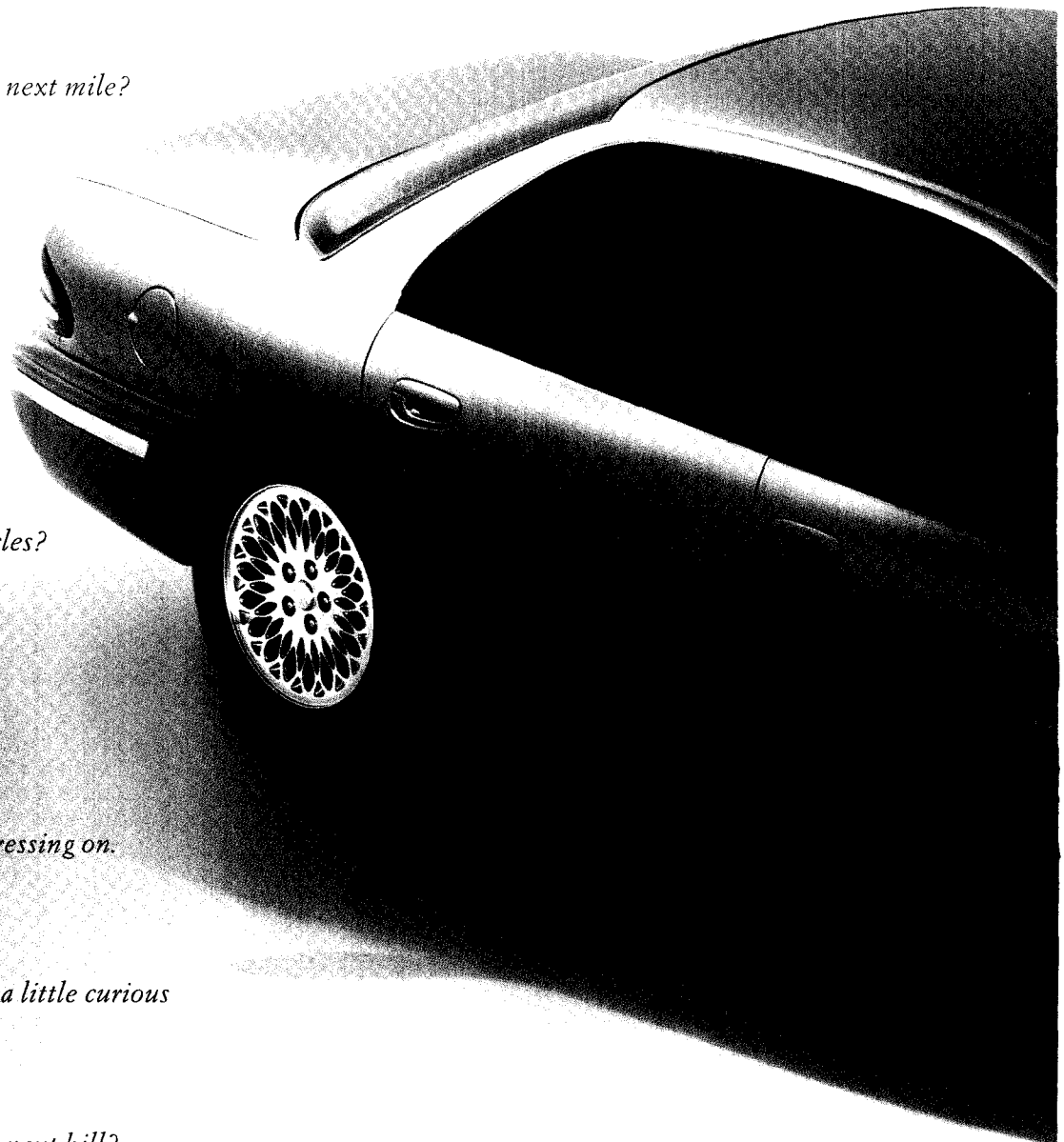
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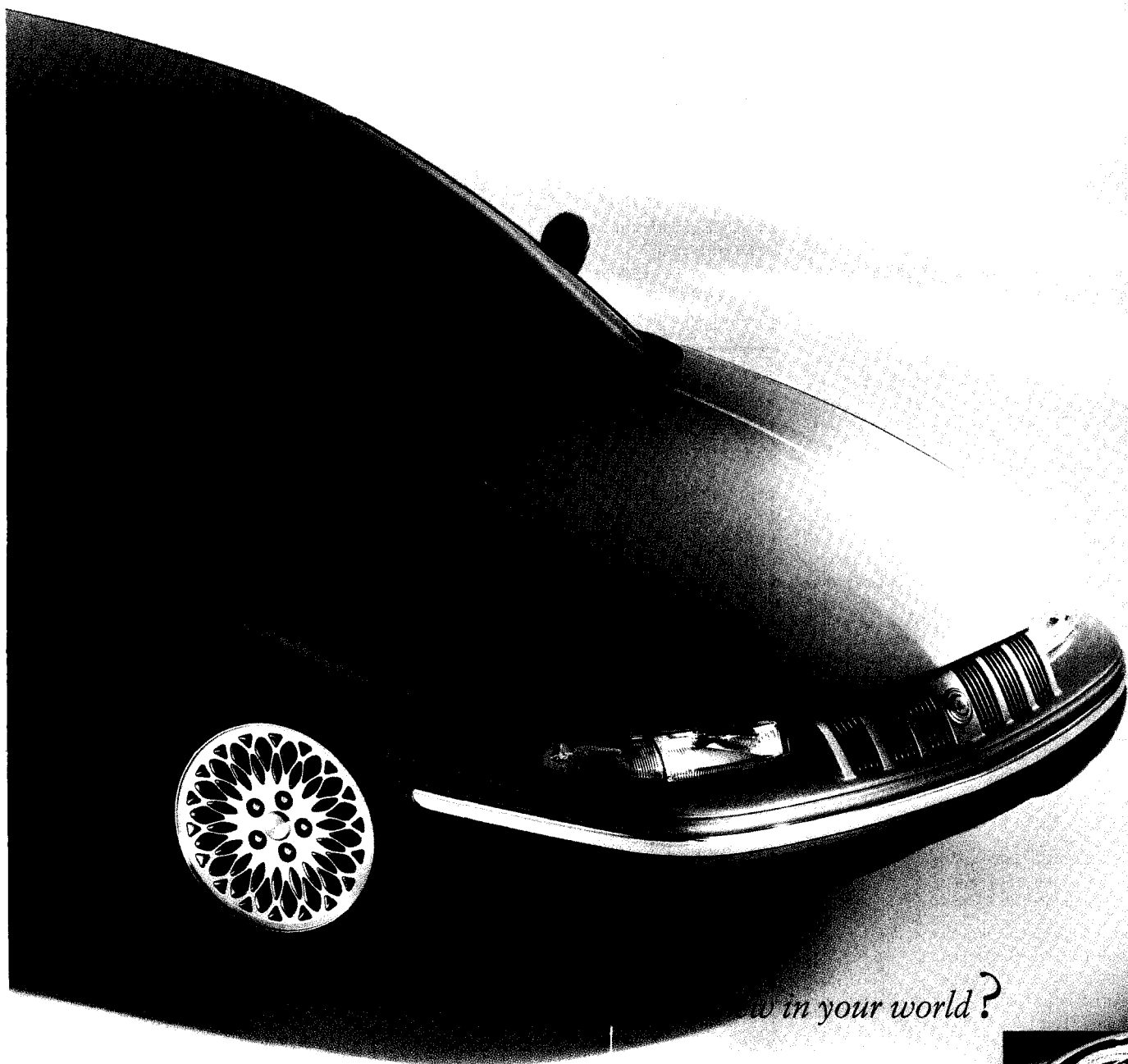
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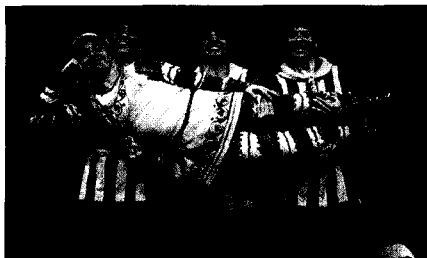
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Dance and Theater

BY AUSTIN BAER AND NANCY DALVA

TRIUMPHANT RETURNS

A few hits, and the proverbial Fabulous Invalid that is Broadway stages an astonishing recovery. It happened last season, thanks in large measure to some inspired revivals that lent American classics brilliant new spin and sparkle. Happily, most of the best are running strong, their stars still blazingly on the job. Despite crinolines and the absence of overt sex, Donna Murphy and Lou Diamond Phillips reveal in Rodgers and Hammerstein's *The King and I* a love story of tigerish intensity. In *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, with its merry, wicked Stephen Sondheim score, Nathan Lane, unfairly faulted for failing to be Zero Mostel, dances on a high wire of classic comic convention, twirling quirky shtick all his own. The irreplaceable Zoe Caldwell, who created the role of Maria Callas in Terrence McNally's ingenious *Master Class*, has passed the torch to Patti LuPone: an Evita for a Medea, and why not? LuPone's diva credentials are in order. Watch her and marvel. Now the new season's hopefuls are chomping at the bit. This month all eyes are on the classy Sigourney Weaver, on furlough from Hollywood for *Sex and Longing*, the new comedy by Chris Durang (her Yale classmate). Ronald Har-



Nathan Lane (top) and LuPone in *Master Class*

wood's *Taking Sides*, which probes the Nazi links of that titan of the podium Wilhelm Furtwängler, showcases the fine-tuned, sharp intelligence of Ed Harris. The next link in the chain of great revivals could well be the Lincoln Center Theater's *The Little Foxes*, starring the always enthralling Stockard Channing as Lillian Hellman's cold-blooded, grasping terror Regina. Watch for her this spring. —A.B.

Austin Baer is a writer based in New York. Nancy Dalva is working on a series of essays on Merce Cunningham.

UNSETTLING THE AMERICAN WEST

Get out your Gestalt meter. Pina Bausch, Tanztheater Wuppertal's high priestess of angst, anomie, and hard-bitten glamour, is turning her jaded gaze on the American West, where she spent a month last winter. Set to American jazz and pop tunes from the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, this new work, called *Nur Du (Only You)*, is said to be about "the breakdown of the American dream," and takes



A scene from *Nur Du (Only You)*

place on a stage set with giant redwood trees. (No surprise to those of us who have taken in her previous mise-en-scènes, which have included leaves, dirt, carnations, dust clouds, collapsing walls, and fish tanks, variously populated by her weirdly glamorous troupe.) This is not the choreographer's first encounter with Americana (from

1958 to 1962 she studied and performed in New York), but hers is a distinctively Germanic point of view. Bausch's four-city tour takes her to Berkeley (October 3-5; 510-642-9988), Los Angeles (October 10-12; 310-825-2101), Tempe (October 17; 602-965-3434), and Austin (October 22; 800-687-6010). —N.D.

A BODY OF WORK

After some thirty-five years of performing and dancing, Trisha Brown retains—gorgeously, improbably, wonderfully—both her potent allure and her rare astringency. Sometimes she has been a hot mind in a cool body, and sometimes the reverse. Her idiosyncratic movement is some of the slipperiest stuff ever seen in dance, described by the art critic Klaus Kertess as "unstable, molecular, and structural." Brown's 1983 masterpiece *Set and Reset* was "the culmination of that way of working," she says, and so she has included it—with the virtuosic Stephen Petronio returning to perform his original solo—on the first program of her twenty-fifth anniversary season at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, where the Trisha Brown Company is opening the Next Wave Festival (October 1-6; 718-636-4100). Also on that bill: her solos *Homemade* (1966) and *Accumulation* (1971), the fabulously fluid *Opal Loop* (1980), and none other than Mikhail Baryshnikov, performing alongside Brown in a mirror-image duet she calls *You can see us* (1994). The meditative score was composed by Brown's longtime collaborator Robert Rauschenberg. Highlights of the two other programs include a duet with the master improviser Steve Paxton and a brand-new dance called *Twelve Ton Rose*. Later this month the company travels (sans guests) to Dartmouth College's Moore Theater (October 11-12; 603-646-2422). —N.D.

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(Continued from page 30)

seep into the repository, contaminating groundwater and allowing radioactivity to escape. Two scientists, holding a decidedly minority view, have even suggested that the buried wastes might “go critical” and explode because of the large amounts of fissionable material packed into a relatively small space. Meanwhile, political opposition is growing: Nevada’s governor and senators, along with local environmental groups, have declared war on the venture. Even if the project can withstand these challenges and move forward, the facility will be seriously undersized the day it opens its doors (2015 is considered the earliest possible date), able to accommodate just a fraction of the high-level waste that will have accumulated by then in the United States.

The government’s unwillingness to prepare a good fallback position in the face of mounting difficulties seems like sheer folly. Although the DOE is not supporting any work on alternative disposal concepts at present, Hollister has not given up. While the ambitious research program he helped to fashion is on hold, he continues to explore the sub-seabed concept in indirect ways. In 1993, for example, he spent six weeks in the Norwegian Sea studying a Soviet nuclear sub that had sunk years before in the middle of an active fishing ground. “The scientific evidence to date points to zero impact if the nuclear material sits beneath the bottom of the sea or even on the bottom,” he says. Other analyses of radioactive spills in the marine environment have reached a similar conclusion: high-level radioactive materials tend to stay put if they are placed in or on a clay-rich sea floor, Hollister claims. Vertical migration rates are so slow that it is “virtually impossible” for measurable concentrations of radioactivity to reach the surface from deep water.

Why won't the United States make a modest investment to find out if sub-seabed burial would work?

“Many people don’t like this conclusion,” he adds, “but I’ve never seen any data in the oceanographic literature that refute it.”

He concedes that the sub-seabed-disposal concept requires additional scrutiny. Several questions, all fairly straightforward, still need to be addressed. For instance, is it better to put the waste in torpedo-shaped canisters that will penetrate the sea floor on their own after being dropped from the surface, or should it be implanted by means of drilling? How deep should the canisters be buried? How will the heat generated by radioactive waste affect the muds lying beneath the ocean? And how strongly will negatively charged clay particles latch on to positively charged ions of uranium, plutonium, cesium, and strontium? “We know exactly what to do to answer these questions,” Hollister says, citing field experiments that have already been designed to determine, for instance, how securely the holes close up around the waste canisters and whether radioactive material moves through ocean-floor clays at the same rates measured in the lab.

Arrangements would have to be made, of course, to ensure the safe transport of waste to the seabed. International laws governing the use of the seas would also have to be addressed, although this might be done while research is under way.

A FORUM already exists that can resolve issues related to sub-seabed disposal: the annual meetings of the contracting parties to the London Dumping Convention, the only international treaty that directly addresses the subject. Should sub-seabed nuclear-waste disposal ever be implemented, the program could be administered and regulated worldwide by the International Maritime Organization, the agency that oversees the functions of the LDC. This prospect may be especially attractive to countries like the Netherlands and Japan, which have little room and no favorable geology for land-based disposal methods.

Yet the treaty may pose the biggest hurdles for this waste-disposal option. Although the dumping of any radioactive waste at sea has been prohibited by international law since 1994, the status of sub-seabed disposal has been ambiguous. This may change very soon: a resolution to be taken up at an LDC meeting at the end of this month would extend the definition of

“dumping” to include “any deliberate disposal or storage of wastes or other matter in the sea-bed and the subsoil thereof.” If the measure passes (and indications are that it will), sub-seabed disposal will be prohibited, and the decision may not be appealed for twenty-five years.

The resolution makes no sense to Edward Miles, an expert on international marine policy at the University of Washington. “On objective grounds, there is no way one can argue that sub-seabed burial is dumping,” he says, pointing out that the United Nations’ International Atomic Energy Agency considers it a “variation of deep geologic disposal on land.” The United States, which lobbied for the sub-seabed approach at the 1984 LDC meeting, has since “flip-flopped” on the issue, he says, and now supports the resolution. “It’s not a position based on any scientific or legal matters. It’s just a political decision attributable to the fact that the environmental community has access to Al Gore and, through him, to President Clinton.”

Clifton Curtis, a political adviser to Greenpeace International, has fought against sub-seabed disposal since 1978, at LDC meetings and elsewhere, in his campaign to “protect the ocean from potentially harmful activities.” He favors land-based disposal options, arguing that “the people who produce nuclear waste should deal with it in their own territory—that would force everyone to pay more attention to what they’re producing.” Terrestrial methods are also superior on the grounds of “monitorability” and “retrievability,” he says. “If there’s ever the need to retrieve the wastes because of a problem, it’s much easier to do so on land.”

Hollister disputes this contention, asserting that the technology exists for both monitoring and recovery at sea. What’s more, he says, sub-seabed retrieval would probably be easier and cheaper than digging vast tunnels into the earth. Yet Curtis remains unconvinced and would like to see the impending ban on sub-seabed disposal apply to research as well—a viewpoint, he claims, that is shared by all major environmental organizations. “There is a broad consensus that ocean dumping of radioactive wastes, including sub-seabed burial, should be prohibited,” he says. “In light of that, it makes more sense to focus our research on terrestrial options.”



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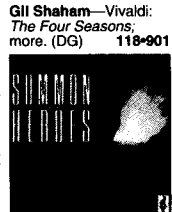
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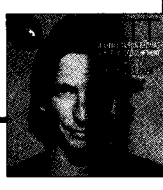
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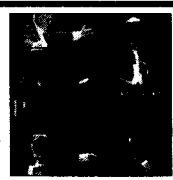
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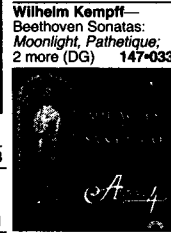
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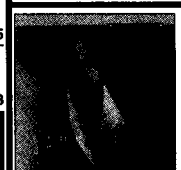
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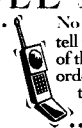
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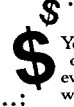
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The London treaty takes no formal position regarding experiments that would involve putting small amounts of radioactive material in the ocean floor. But even if such studies are not explicitly forbidden, Miles argues, the U.S. government is highly unlikely to fund such research in the face of an international (and national) disposal ban. "A decision to classify sub-seabed disposal as dumping would effectively kill the idea by cutting off any motivation to continue the research," he says. "And without any additional research there will be nothing to reconsider twenty-five years from now."

Another assault on sub-seabed disposal comes in the form of a House bill, HR 1020, that at the time of this writing was scheduled for a vote in September. It contains a section written by Frank Pallone Jr., a New Jersey congressman, that would prohibit the funding of research related to the sub-seabed disposal of radioactive waste. Sub-seabed disposal "is something that shouldn't even be considered," says Rick Kessler, an aide to Pallone, by way of explaining the motivation behind the bill. "Why should the U.S. taxpayer spend a penny researching something that will never happen?"

Hollister is puzzled by the flurry of attacks on a field that has been unfunded and dormant for a decade. "I have no problem with a ban on sub-seabed disposal," he says. "I think it should be banned until we do more experiments. What troubles me is people who are trying to ban *research* on the subject." Rather than discouraging inquiry to meet short-term political objectives, he says, we should be actively exploring all reasonable disposal options. He suspects that the opposition to sub-seabed disposal is part of a broader opposition to nuclear energy in general. "Some people don't want to hear about anything nuclear, even solutions," he says.

Paul Slovic, a psychologist at Decision Research, in Eugene, Oregon, who serves on the National Academy of Sciences Board on Radioactive Waste Management, believes that many people are opposed to doing anything with high-level nuclear waste. "They don't have any position except to not deal with it. Any suggestion you could make would be considered unacceptable." This attitude, which is compounded by a widespread mistrust of government and the nuclear

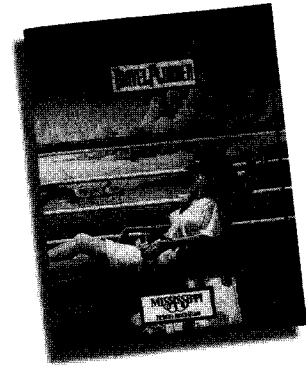
industry, makes the problem "quite intractable," Slovic says. "We still haven't figured out as a society how to make decisions about high-level radioactive wastes."

John Kelly, the consultant, has a more optimistic outlook. "Some say that it's institutionally impossible to find a solution, and I think that's right if we don't have an active research-and-education program," he says. "On the other hand, you have to believe that people can change their opinions in the face of new scientific findings." This process could take a while, possibly a generation, but he considers that a reasonable time frame for developing a sound waste-disposal system.

Decisions should not be made hastily; nor should they be postponed indefinitely. The status quo is not an attractive option, because it entails considerable risks and costs. U.S. nuclear-weapons-production facilities alone have generated millions of gallons of high-level wastes whose careless handling has led to extensive contamination of the sites and in some cases the areas around them. Now the government is paying about \$5.5 billion a year to contractors—as part of the biggest and costliest environmental cleanup effort ever undertaken—to try to contain this radioactive mess until permanent waste repositories become available. (Some \$400 million a year is being spent on getting such repositories ready.) Over the next century the price tag for the cleanup may be anywhere from a quarter of a trillion to a trillion dollars, a staggering sum that makes most congressional cost-cutting efforts look trivial.

The cleanup program has become a boondoggle, partly owing to bureaucratic mismanagement and partly because the task of environmental remediation has been complicated by the lack of a permanent disposal method. That's why a safe, secure, and long-term solution is so important. If we investigate thoroughly, we just might find that the best place to deposit our high-level nuclear trash is in the low-level abyssal clays beneath the ocean. It's possible, of course, that we'll conclude after further study that sub-seabed disposal is not the answer, but we ought to spend the time and money to find out. Charles Hollister's estimate of the necessary investment, \$250 million, equals the budget for about two weeks of the current, and faltering, nuclear cleanup and waste-disposal operation. ☞

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Banana Man

*A pseudonymous Los Angeles columnist stirs
up the Korean-American community*

THE most magical thing about journalism is the possibility that anybody, anywhere, might publish something *alive*. This kind of democratic miracle doesn't occur very often, even in the age of the Internet, but when it does, it's exciting and inspiring. The example I've run across most recently is *KoreAm Journal*, a six-year-old monthly publication with a circulation of 12,000 that is published out of an office-warehouse complex in Gardena, California.

"KoreAm" is short for "Korean-American"; part of what's impressive about

this journal is that it has risen out of the swamp of ethnic publishing, where boosterism is the prevailing ethos and one of the most interesting subjects in American life is made safe

and dull. *KoreAm Journal* does inform

subscribers if someone becomes the first Korean-American to achieve a position, or if a leader protests some insult to the group. But it also reports bad news ("KOREAN BANKS DOING POORLY IN LOS ANGELES"), and it can get across the full scope of a big, messy issue such as black-Korean relations. Rarer still, it tries to capture the ambiguity and com-

plexity of its main theme—assimilation.

The most popular feature in the journal is an anonymous advice column called "Dear Banana Man." The author, depicted in a cartoon that accompanies every column as a muscular, booted, moustachioed figure in a banana costume, is a swaggering know-it-all who swats back answers to questions about everything from presidential politics to courtship. Not long ago I wrote to him, meekly requesting an interview. As I should have expected, Banana Man printed my letter in his column and then responded to it in print.

My editor assures me that I'll get paid for granting this interview. My first question, of course, is how much? If there is no money, then I gotta ask, "What's in it for Banana Man?" Publicity is the last thing the Great Yellow One desires.

We ironed out that issue (Banana Man dropped his insistence on being paid), and I went to see him in Los Angeles. Attempts to unmask Banana Man, and

by **Nicholas Lemann**

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his teasing evasions, are a leitmotif of the column. He has hinted that he may be married with children, but the main impression he gives is of a tough, macho, ungovernable character. Here's a typical Banana Man pronunciamento: "These namby-pamby, bleeding-heart liberal weenies who favor gun control are totally lost." He says he has received death threats as a result of his column.

Banana Man plays against the stereotype of Korean-Americans as submissive straight-A students who care only about obtaining graduate degrees and making propitious within-group marriages. Several years ago *KoreAm Journal* published a comic strip called *Robert Kool*, in which the hero was abducted by a group of gorgeous women who tied him up in an abandoned warehouse and revealed their membership in a secret organization: "We're committed to make sure that no young Korean American man or woman ever gets involved with anything other than medicine, law, business, or engineering. With the sure thing." To this end they planned to "dispose of" every Korean-American aspiring writer or artist whose success might get others off the track. Banana Man's position is that such threats wouldn't frighten him.

WITHOUT breaking the terms of an elaborate agreement we made to protect Banana Man's anonymity, I can report that he isn't quite the bad boy he makes himself out to be. It is true that he came roaring up to our interview on a big black Suzuki motorcycle, which he was driving because the new Harley-Davidson he had ordered hadn't arrived yet, and that he is a freelance writer without a secure, credential-requiring job. On the other hand, he lives in a suburban-style tract house that is impeccably neat except for the room in which he works. I won't reveal the location, but I will say that it is an ethnically diverse community in Los Angeles County where many upwardly mobile Korean-Americans have settled because the public schools are separate from, and better than, those in the enormous Los Angeles Unified School District. Banana Man's wife was born in Korea. He is the son of a prominent, respectable father—a former judo champion in Korea who has held a series of high-level positions

both there and in the United States. Upon entering Banana Man's house, people take off their shoes, in keeping with Korean tradition but also in deference to the shiny wooden floors.

James "Bear" Ryu, the editor of *KoreAm Journal*, belongs to what's called "the one-and-a-half generation" of Korean-Americans: he was born in Korea and brought to the United States as a child during the early 1970s, so that his father could attend graduate school here. (James Ryu's father, Jung S. Ryu, who has a doctorate, holds the honorary title of publisher of *KoreAm Journal* and writes a statesmanlike column in every issue.) Banana Man has a similar life story, except that he was born here. Both Ryu and Banana Man lived in university towns in the Midwest before gravitating to Los Angeles, the capital city for Korean-Americans. After graduating from college Banana Man planned to enter law school but decided at the last minute not to go, disappointing his parents. Ryu, meanwhile, was working part-time as a sushi chef while completing college. The two met when Banana Man happened to go to the restaurant where Ryu worked. In 1990, a few months after Ryu had started *KoreAm Journal*, Banana Man told me, he called Ryu "to tell him what sucked about his paper—nothing was fun." The Banana Man column was the result of this conversation. For the inaugural column Banana Man and Ryu made up the advice-seeking letters, but since then almost all the letters have been real.

"Banana" is a derisive Korean-American slang word equivalent to "Oreo" among blacks. It means "yellow on the outside, white on the inside" (an alternate term is "Twinkie"). Many children of immigrants from Korea are vulnerable to accusations of bananadom, because they speak little or no Korean and don't live in Koreatown; marriage and church attendance are their only strong voluntary links to the group. (They would call their accusers "FOBs," for "fresh off the boat.") In his choice of nom de plume Banana Man decided to flaunt what he's supposed to be ashamed of.

Freed by his name and his persona, Banana Man regularly departs from the approved set of ethnic positions. In the minds of both African-Americans and Korean-Americans, a crucial prelude to

the Los Angeles riots was an incident that got very little national publicity, in which a Korean shopkeeper in South Central accused a black teenage girl of attempting to steal a bottle of orange juice and then, following an altercation, shot and killed her with a .38 pistol. The shopkeeper, a woman, was convicted of voluntary manslaughter but given a suspended sentence; Banana Man took the black side in the case by writing that she had gotten off too lightly.

Another time, he advised one of his readers to be careful about marrying a Korean girl, because he might be merely a pawn in an immigration scheme: "As for dipping into the Motherland gene pool, I'd be very, very cautious. Would you be used as a ticket into this country? Then unceremoniously dumped a year or so later?"

Perhaps the ultimate Banana Man apostasy was this question to his readers, which flouts the official position not just of Korean-Americans but of every ethnic group:

What would you be? It wouldn't be Korean, that's for sure. Or even Korean American. You'd be lying if you said otherwise. The plain fact of the matter is: Banana Man is Korean American. I never lie. If given the choice, I would not be Korean American.

Banana Man plainly feels that he doesn't have that choice: Korean-Americanness is forced upon him by the outside world. As he wrote in 1992 about a television interview of Ross Perot,

No one, not even Barbara Walters, took notice of his ethnic inflection of "Lots of luck, fella." He said, "Rotsa ruck, ferra," when talking about America's propensity to offer aid to foreign countries, Asian in particular. Which just goes to show you how mainstream and accepted such bigoted attitudes really are.

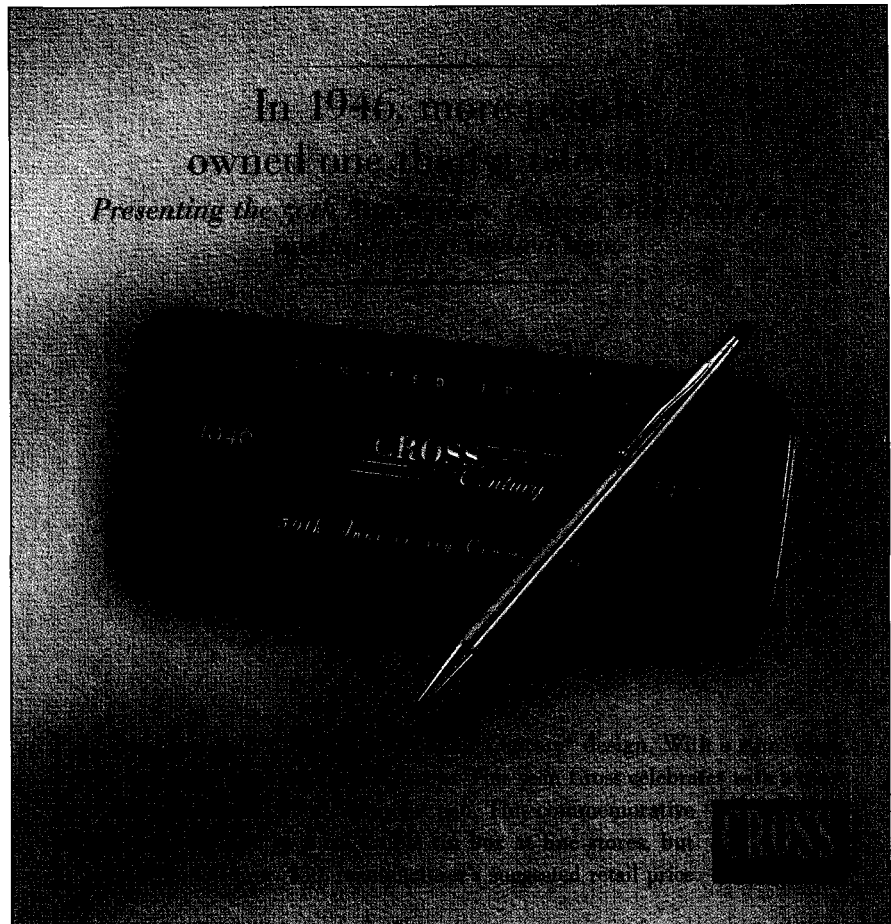
In his view, Korean-Americans are destined to be misunderstood by both Koreans and Americans, so all they really have is one another.

A year ago Banana Man wrote about himself, "No matter how hard I try to be a dick, my niceness comes through. You all see through my politically-incorrect, bad-boy posturing. I'm a fake." His candor is admirable, but to my mind it's ad-

dressed to the wrong question—namely, Which is the “real” Banana Man, the outlaw or the married homeowner? The question that instead interests me is, Which of the two sides of Banana Man is Korean and which is American? In the past few decades the literature on assimilation has been dominated by Jews and blacks, and in both cases the “front,” American version of the self is nice and well behaved and the “real,” ethnic version is wild and ungovernable. America is the superego and the group of origin is the id; assimilation means repression.

In the case of Banana Man, however, his persona is not designed to allow the Korean within to express himself. It is instead exactly the kind of false self that Alexander Portnoy and the Invisible Man created for the purpose of dealing with the mainstream American world. Rather than being meek, however, it's strutting—based on the way Americans appear to Koreans. “He's king; he knows everything,” James Ryu says of Banana Man. “That's American. You'd never do that in Korean culture. You always say, ‘I think.’ It's your opinion. He's breaking free of the culture.” In that sense Banana Man is perhaps really white on the outside and yellow on the inside—more like a fried egg.

In January, Banana Man announced in his column that he intends to retire and issued a call for applications from would-be successors (though they won't be allowed to use the name). “Show me your range,” he wrote. “Cover a KA topic, a matter of the heart, a socio-political question, a technical query, and, of course, a hate letter.” I don't doubt that Banana Man will quit: James Ryu, who is the only full-time employee of *Kore-Am Journal*, having laid off the entire staff as an economy move back in 1993, pays him just a small monthly stipend, and it must be a difficult act to sustain anyway. Some writers who invent personas for themselves find that the persona becomes more real, more comfortable, than the self, so they cast aside their given identity and go on writing in character. Mark Twain is the obvious example. Banana Man is not one of these writers. It would take too much effort to keep writing as the person he has made up—the fully assimilated American guy, only nominally Korean—if that isn't the person he is deep inside. ☼



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I WAS sitting on the subway a few weeks ago when I looked up and saw a baby, just a little less than a year old, swinging from the overhead bar. She was flanked by two young teenage girls who thought this was a great way to entertain their little sister. As the train began to move, I could visualize the baby flying across the car. Without really thinking, I said to the girls, "Hey, that's not a good idea. That baby is going to get hurt. You better sit down with her on the seat." The kids gave me one of those "Who do you think you are?" looks they reserve for meddling adults, but they took the baby off the bar and sat down.

I was suddenly struck by the silence in the subway car. The normal hum of conversation had vanished. My fellow passengers, who had witnessed my encounter with the kids, were now engrossed in their newspapers and books or staring at something fascinating on the subway-tunnel wall. The car was not very crowded, and everyone had seen that endangered baby just as clearly as I had, but they had chosen not to get involved. Although most of them now avoided eye contact with me, a few treated me to the kind of disdain reserved for troublemakers. Could it be that my fellow passengers didn't care

about that baby? Or were they just afraid to interfere?

We've all heard the old African saying "It takes a whole village to raise a child." Americans have adopted it, and I understand why. It expresses some things that we can all easily accept: family values, shared responsibility, community spirit. But do we really believe in it as a guiding principle for our lives? When we repeat it, are we pledging ourselves to carry out its imperative? I don't think so.

Americans are known for generosity. We're ready to rescue the suffering children of the world. We send food to Ethiopia after our television screens show us little kids with huge eyes and distended bellies. We help the victims of floods, and we fund agencies to take care of refugees and abandoned children. We are the nation that invented the poster child and the telethon. These nameless suffering children touch our hearts—but they do not touch our lives.

The same adults who are profoundly moved by the plight of children they will never know seem to be willing to ignore the children they encounter every day, even if it is obvious that these children are in trouble or that they need a little adult guidance. I've watched adults actually move away from children they see

approaching. I'm not talking about hostile, swaggering gangs of teenage boys—although even some of them are just exhibiting the high that comes with that first surge of testosterone. I'm talking about the ordinary, harmless children we all come in contact with every day on the streets of our cities, towns, and, yes, villages.

I'm keeping score, counting the number of times I find myself the only person in a crowd who dares to interact with a child she doesn't know.

A few days after the swinging-baby incident I was waiting on a crowded subway platform when someone pushed me from behind. I turned to see three teenage girls, giggling, ebullient, and so eager to get on the train just pulling into the station that they were shoving. Again I reacted without thinking. "Stop pushing—we'll all get on," I said. After a few murmured remarks along the lines of "Get lost, lady," they stopped. So did the conversation around me. Eyes swiveled away. I felt a collective intake of breath. Disapproval hung in the air, but mainly I sensed fear.

Seconds later the train doors opened, and we all stepped in. The woman who dropped into the seat next to me said, "Wow, that was a brave thing to do." When I suggested that it was no such thing, she said, "Well, you can't be too careful these days." That's just it, I thought. You *can* be too careful.

In both these encounters I treated harmless children as if they were indeed harmless. They may have been foolish, thoughtless, rambunctious, rude, or annoying. But the only one in any danger was that baby swinging on the bar.

I live in a big city. I know that there are violent armed children, hopeless and desperate kids out there. There is no way that I can attack the serious urban problems we all hear about on the evening news. But I am convinced that I can contribute to the larger solutions by refusing to recoil from kids just because they are acting like kids. A lost child who encounters fear instead of concern is twice lost. By responding to these children we may begin to build a village where they will flourish and adults can live without fear. ☸

GRAPHIC BY GILLIAN KAHN



Pushkar Fair, Rajasthan



Coconut Lagoon, Kerala

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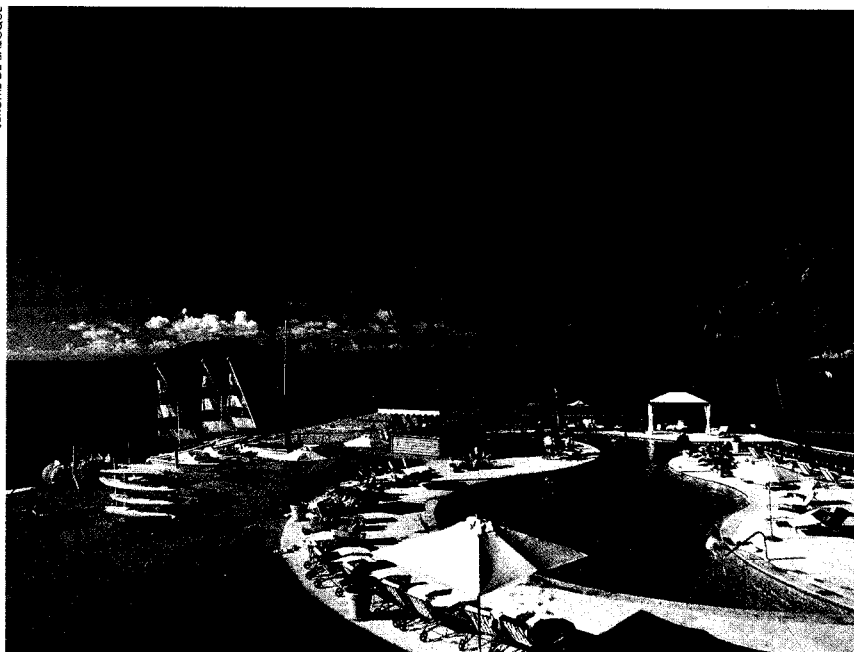
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Two Kinds of Paradise

*Nevis has one of the
Caribbean's grandest resorts and some
of its most historic inns*

PARADISE, according to one view of it, requires the involvement of a major corporation. How else to be able to buy an appealing site with an ample beach, and then to install a few swimming pools and an outdoor Jacuzzi, lay out a first-quality golf course, and

by Barbara Wallraff

build restaurants, bars, and air-conditioned guest rooms with every amenity from a big bathroom to cable TV? According to an alternative view, a paradise open to the public can be founded with the amount of money that might be available to a well-to-do family. That's enough to rebuild or renovate a historic plantation great house, put up some guest cottages, install a swimming pool.

The Caribbean island of Nevis, part of the nation of St. Kitts and Nevis (a British colony until 1983), is pretty, quiet, and clean—a good start for a paradise of either type. And it is known for its deluxe

Four Seasons resort and its plantation inns, which nicely correspond to the two visions of paradise, I thought when I stayed at the resort and several inns, at their invitation, earlier this year. There are few modern hotels or motels on Nevis, few tourist shops, and no all-inclusive resorts; thus Nevisian tourism in general has an unusual, understated quality. I liked this very much and grew curious about why Nevis is so different from every other Caribbean island I've visited.

That Caribbean islands might have paradisiacal qualities was not widely accepted until sometime in this century. For countless millennia many of them were dry, barren, hostile. Once Europeans arrived and, against their will, Africans, the islands that were better than that became places of backbreaking agricultural labor. Nevis, like a number of other islands,

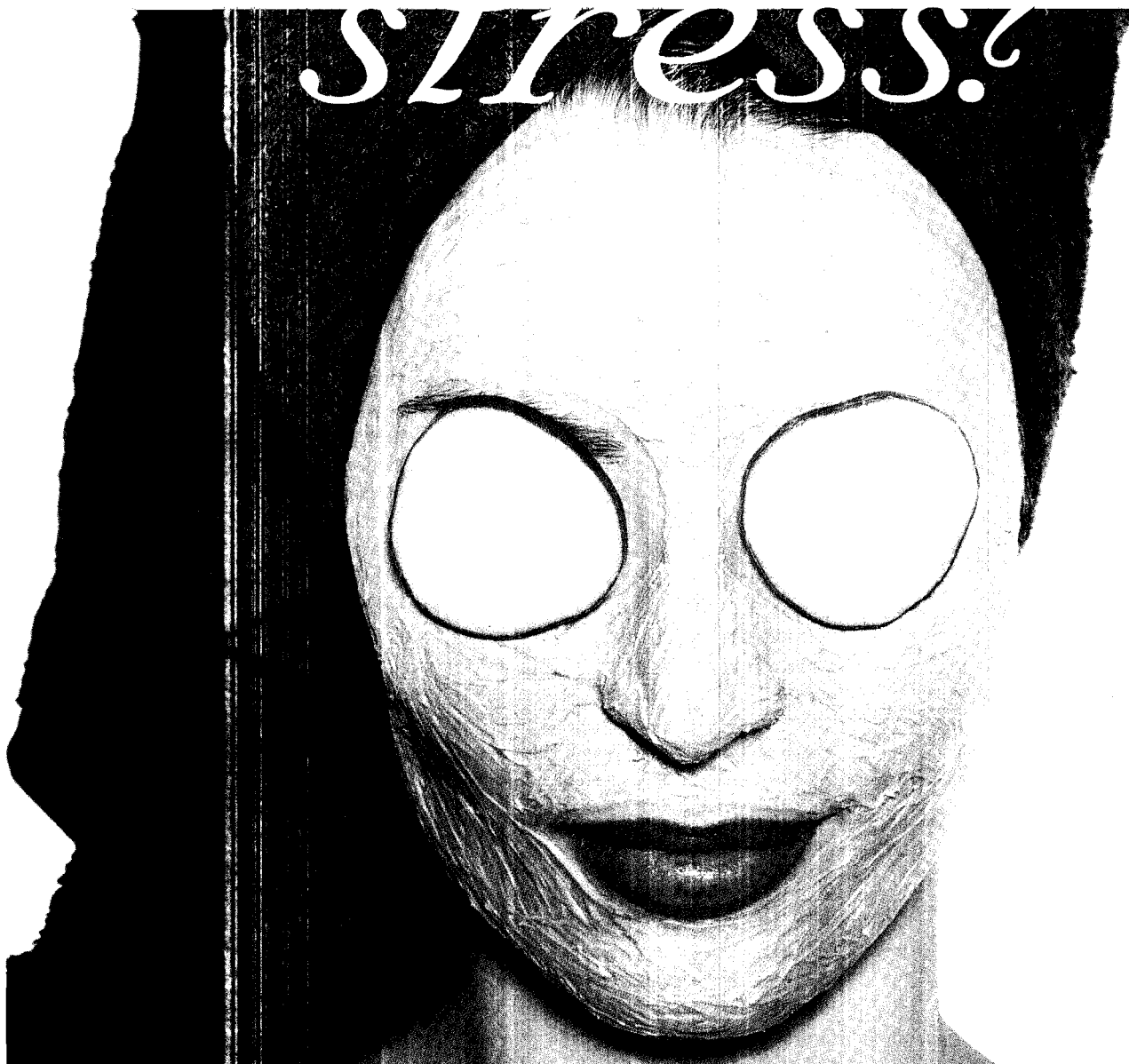
The Four Seasons Resort Nevis

produced sugar, and today its landscape is dotted with the round, tapered stone remains of sugar mills. According to some sources, outrage over the extreme cruelty of a Nevis plantation owner, one Edward Huggins, was a proximate cause for the outlawing of slavery throughout the British Empire in the 1830s. As in the American South, the ban was the beginning of the end for plantation economies, although not until 1956 did Nevis's last sugar plantation shut down. The Caribbean's next successful crop was tourists—a development made possible by the coming of airplane travel and the post-war boom in the United States and Europe. Some islands seized on the potential of this new industry; others, like Nevis, lagged behind.

Eventually the region's economic planners realized that one tourist who is willing to spend \$250 a day is economically more than five times as desirable as five tourists who can spend only \$50, because one tourist uses less water than five, and generates less garbage, and takes up less space on the roads. Of course islands and resorts have to compete hard to attract rich tourists, and compete they do. As David Rollinson, a marvelously erudite history and ecology guide who took me for an educational walk on Nevis, explained, "It's not as if we can just grow soybeans or something if tourism doesn't work out. We don't have any choice."

In this competition a lack of earlier, now crumbling development can be an advantage, as Nevis has found. Besides, Nevis is that paragon, a volcanic island with beaches. Volcanic islands tend to be mountainous, with fertile soil and, because of the mountains, ample rainfall. Thus they're generally more scenic than islands that were created in less dramatic ways. What's more, as Rollinson told me, "volcanic islands have more interesting histories, because they've had water and hence agriculture." On our walk we saw, among other things, a picturesquely ruined sugar plantation and a deserted beach strewn with glossy red shards of Arawak pottery dating back to A.D. 600.

The sweep of Nevis's history is remarkable, and the local people, some 90



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percent of whom are black, seemed proud of it—at least in the way that a family would be proud of a valuable antique they had inherited that might or might not be to their taste: proud that America's early Jamestown settlers paused on their island first, that Alexander Hamilton was born here, that Horatio Nelson was married here, that much of the capital, Charlestown, dates from the seventeenth century and has been designated a World Heritage Site. People seemed proud of the diversity implied in their history as well. Philip Morton, who drove me around Nevis, pointed out the seventeenth-century Jewish cemetery with the same enthusiasm as he did the 350-year-old Anglican churches. (As for contemporary diversity: it is not lost on Nevisians that many of the owners and managers of the successful tourist accommodations are white immigrants from the United States, Canada, and Europe; these new arrivals, for their part, put their children in the local schools and speak glowingly of Nevis as a wholesome, virtually crime-free place to raise kids.) Fortunately, the kind of tourist who might be interested in all this history and diversity is perhaps the same kind of person the island's accommodations are likely to suit. (Information about all tourist accommodations is available from the St. Kitts and Nevis Department of Tourism; call 800-582-6208.)

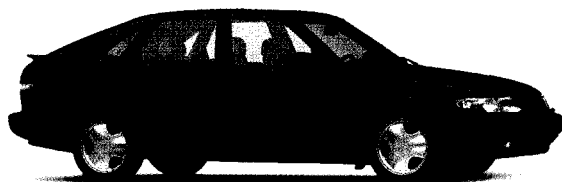
It was a source of tremendous excitement for Nevisians when, almost six years ago, the Four Seasons corporation opened its first resort property—and still its only Caribbean one—on the island's Pinney's Beach. The resort is by far the largest private employer on the island, and Nevis remains so grateful to it that earlier this year the government issued commemorative stamps in honor of its fifth anniversary. The Four Seasons chain has a devoted following among business travelers, who feel that its city hotels demonstrate a near-perfect understanding of their needs. The formula seems to boil down to a maximum of facilities and a minimum of hassles—a formula also likely to please tired captains of industry and their families on vacation. Tired or not, guests can find a great deal to do here: golf, take a snorkeling excursion, swim in the pools, swim or windsurf or sail in the ocean, shop, eat (well) in three restaurants, rent videos, dance

under the stars. And everything happens effortlessly, except paying for it: from November 1 through mid-December room rates start at \$625 a day for two, including breakfast and dinner, and in high season rates rise to \$950 a day. This may sound steep, but it's what Caribbean luxury costs. The rates at a number of hotels on nearby St. Barts alone are higher still.

The 196-room Four Seasons Resort Nevis (for more information call 800-332-3442) has all the amenities you'd expect, and others you'd never think of: washers and dryers for guests to use at will, a staffed child-care center, and private launches to bring guests over from the international airport on St. Kitts (people staying elsewhere typically take a six-minute flight and then hire a taxi or rent a car). Such amenities are what minimize hassle. Then again, I reflected as I swung gently in a fluffy white-rope hammock suspended between palm trees, one person's hassle is another person's local color. Admittedly, the resort encourages guests to see the island and eat at restaurants besides its own. (It can't, though, make it convenient, for although Nevis is small and you can drive around it in less than an hour, nothing is especially close to anything else, and you'll have to drive or take taxis to eat out. For this reason and also because the prices on the Four Seasons' menus are high—a dinner entree of Caribbean lobster costs \$48, for example—it's wise to book a package that includes breakfast and dinner.) Still, people who are hoping to experience a Caribbean culture may find this paradise bland. Four Seasons guests under the sway of such feelings can be seen slipping out to Sunshine's, a locally owned open-air bar a few yards down the beach. It's a tourist place, but it's fun anyway. The specialty here is a rum-based drink called a Killer Bee, which a British writer once called "the alcoholic equivalent of an Exocet" missile.

Nevis, to all evidence, continues to occupy a special place in British hearts—and vice versa. There's a sweet little Horatio Nelson museum just outside Charlestown, young Nevisians play cricket, and most of the inns serve afternoon tea—a good hot potful with cake, and never mind that it's probably ninety degrees and sunny and you're sitting by the pool. The best of the inns, Montpelier, stands on the spot where Nelson married a

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local woman, Fanny Nisbet; and its owners and operators are a delightful family of British expats, the Milnes Gaskells.

Montpelier certainly amounts to a strong argument in favor of the more personal vision of paradise. The seventeen guest rooms here—though they're in cottages that aren't a bit historic and the sea



Montpelier's great house

views from them are distant—are clean, airy, white, spacious, and comfortably appointed. Guests must drive to the beach, or use the inn's shuttle, but once they do, they have a quiet stretch of sand all to themselves, nicely set up with bath-rooms, cabanas, and sturdy chaise longues. Underwater are scattered more conch shells and sand dollars than I've ever before seen in one place. Lazy guests might prefer to ease into the large swimming pool back at the inn. Not-so-lazy guests at Montpelier—or anywhere else on the island—may use the Four Seasons' golf course, for a fee.

The most impressive thing about Montpelier is the rebuilt historic great house, where you can enjoy the best food on the island (people staying elsewhere often come over for meals). Dinner consists of four elegant courses served by candlelight out on the broad verandah: an appetizer of lobster medallions, for example, followed by spinach and cheese cannelloni, a main course of grilled mahi-mahi with a light Niçoise sauce, and a beautiful fruity dessert. Then it's time to adjourn for coffee and homemade chocolates. The wine list, too, is a tour de force of surprisingly well priced good stuff: the wine cellar, most of which comes from France via St. Barts, is a hobby of James Milnes Gaskell's. Montpelier's high-season rates for two people, including break-

fast, start at \$280 a night; dinner costs \$45–\$55 a person additional. (For more information call 809-469-3462.)

SEVERAL years ago, before I had any intention of visiting Nevis, a man I know took a Caribbean sailing vacation with his parents and his fiancée, and brought me back a brochure for Nevis's Golden Rock Estate. It was the place he most wanted to return to, he told me, of anywhere his sailing party had been. Of course I was eager to stop by, and the hotel's owner, Pam Barry, invited me to have lunch and a look around. We toured the place in the company of a little red-and-green parrot that perched on her shoulder, clacking its beak and muttering "Get serious!" over and over. After a time a troop of vervet monkeys came out of the surrounding rain forest to cavort by the hotel's entrance.

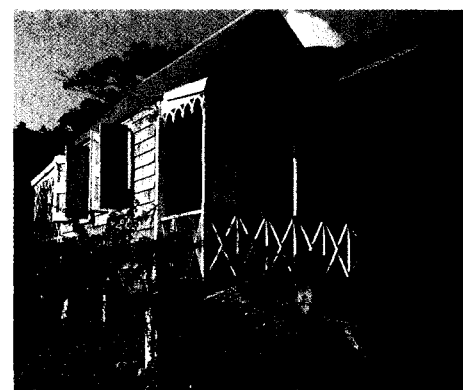
The hotel has been fashioned from the great house and outbuildings of a plantation built by, as it happens, the infamous slaver Edward Huggins (the old sugar mill is now a unique guest suite). Barry, a descendant of Huggins's, has made a point of hiring Nevisian craftspeople to create the furnishings and art for the sixteen guest rooms, most of which are in simple outbuildings of recent construction. (I thought it might be time, however, for her to commission them to make a few new things, including new furniture for some of the public rooms.) When I came home, I told my friend who had brought me the brochure that I thought the place seemed a bit down-at-heel. He didn't disagree but said it was an advantage as far as he and his fiancée were concerned. "If a place isn't a little bit funky," he told me, "we can't afford it." Golden Rock's rates in season start at \$255 for two, including breakfast and dinner. (For



The sugar mill at Golden Rock

more information call 800-223-9832.)

Two other inns where I did stay, The Hermitage, with fourteen rooms and suites, and Nisbet Plantation Beach Club, with thirty-eight, have their strengths—and their weaknesses. The handsome great house of The Hermitage, where drinks and dinner are served, is said to be the oldest wooden building in the Caribbean, and a few of the guest cottages are historic structures that have been trucked up the hillside from other locations on the island. The overall effect, with brightly painted gingerbread trim and pretty flowers along the walkway, is downright giddy. (Rates here start at \$325 for two, including breakfast and dinner; call 800-223-9832.) And Nisbet Plantation is directly on the beach; my room here, with a charming little screened-in sitting area full of comfortable furniture, was the



A guest cottage at The Hermitage

nicest of any of those in the inns where I stayed. (Rates start at \$355 for two, including breakfast and dinner; call 800-742-6008.) But I didn't much enjoy the food at either of these two inns. Uninspired food is a major drawback, because neither of these inns is convenient to anywhere else to eat.

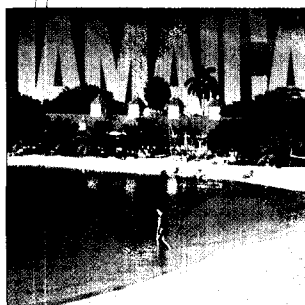
The fish barbecue served every Thursday night at Nisbet, though, is fun and delicious—worth coming to no matter where you're staying. At first everyone sips rum punch, listens to the live music, and admires the display of fresh seafood on ice. Then, after a while, the staff fires up the charcoal grill, and the big serving platters fill up. Often when the moon is bright, I was told, a boating party motors over from St. Kitts for this barbecue. It might not be everyone's idea of paradise—but after all, what is? Long may hoteliers keep trying to create a paradise to suit every taste. ☞

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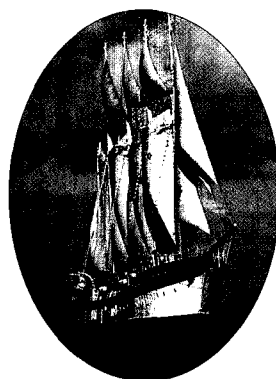


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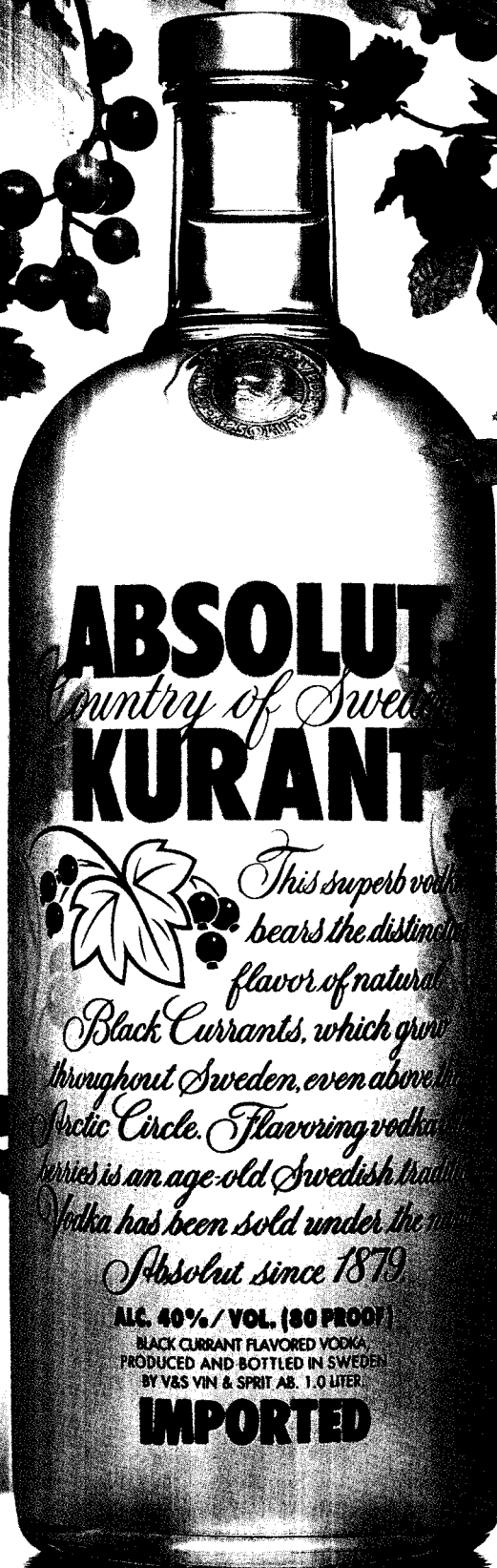
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THOMAS JEFFERSON: Radical and Racist

by CONOR CRUISE O'BRIEN

*In the multiracial American future Jefferson will
not be thought of as the Sage of Monticello. His flaws are
beyond redemption. The sound you hear is
the crashing of a reputation*

IN an address at Michigan State University on May 5, 1995, President Bill Clinton warned right-wing militias not to attempt to “appropriate our sacred symbols for paranoid purposes.” The President was speaking in the aftermath of the destruction, apparently by American right-wing fanatics, of the federal building in Oklahoma City and its occupants on April 19. The aftermath of that ghastly act had brought media reports of widespread paramilitary conspiracies in several states—notably the militias in Michigan—for the organization of armed resistance to the federal government. The President was seeking to exclude such conspirators from what is called the American civil religion.

There is quite a copious literature about the American civ-

il religion, and although there are differences over the exact nature of this powerful but nebulous concept, there is also a broad consensus about its general nature.

The term “civil religion” was first used by Jean-Jacques Rousseau and refers to “the religious dimension of the polity.” *American* civil religion has been summed up by one scholar as “an institutionalized collection of sacred American beliefs providing sources of cohesion and prophetic guidance through times of national crises.” Among those sacred beliefs, a cult of liberty has been important from very early on. The sociologist Robert N. Bellah quotes a 1770 observer’s opinion that “the minds of the people are wrought up into as high a degree of Enthusiasm by the word liberty, as could have been expected had Religion been the cause.”

Liberty, nationalism, and faith are fused in the American civil religion. As Norman Mailer once put it, “In America,

the country was the religion. And all the religions of the land were fed from that first religion. . . .”

Central to the American civil religion are two eighteenth-century documents: the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. Around these documents, and linked with them in the religion, are a limited number of historical figures—for all Americans, the Founding Fathers; for most Americans, also Abraham Lincoln. In the pantheon of the American civil religion, however, two holy personages stand out with unusually large halos. As Richard Pierard and Robert Linder, the authors of *Civil Religion & the Presidency* (1988), write,

The Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and later, Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address became the sacred scriptures of the new public faith. Just as the colonists saw their own church covenants as vehicles of God’s participation in history, so these public documents became the covenants which bound the people of the nation together in a political and religious union. . . . A leadership imagery developed that paralleled the biblical account of Israel and led to the Founding Fathers mythology. . . . Before long Washington had become the Moses-liberator figure, Jefferson the prophet.

THE POPE OF LIBERTY

THERE is no difficulty in seeing Jefferson as the prophet of the American civil religion if one thinks of him as the author of its most sacred document, the Declaration of Independence, and leaves it at that. But there is great difficulty in fitting the historical Jefferson, with all we know of him, into the civil religion of modern America (as it is generally and semi-officially expounded) at all, let alone in seeing him as its prophet.

Thomas Jefferson was in his day a prophet of American civil religion. Indeed, if his original draft of the Declaration of Independence had been accepted, the Declaration would have been more explicitly linked to the American civil religion than it is in its present form. Whereas the second paragraph of the Declaration opens with the words “We hold these truths to be self-evident . . .,” Jefferson’s original draft had “We hold these truths to be sacred and undeniable . . .” The drafting of the Declaration had been entrusted by the Second Continental Congress to a committee of five, of which the leading members were Jefferson, John Adams, and Benjamin Franklin. Although Rousseau’s phrase “civil religion” does not seem to have been in circulation in America at this time (when it would have been suspect in the eyes of churchmen), Jefferson—whether through Rousseau or not—was a “civil religion” person in his habitual use of language. Adams objected strongly to the mixing of politics and religion. Franklin was more consistently secular than Jefferson in his style. The historian Carl Lotus Becker writes, on the change in the manuscript to “self-evident,” “It is not clear that this change was made by Jeffer-

son. The hand-writing of ‘self-evident’ resembles Franklin’s.” The change was an improvement, functionally speaking, for a revolutionary manifesto. Anyone who rejects a “self-evident truth” must be either a fool or a knave. And that is precisely what the Founders wanted to say about anyone who opposed the Declaration. Jefferson himself appreciated the polemical force of this word, and often used it later.

Thomas Jefferson served as the American Minister to France from 1785 to late in 1789, and thus witnessed the last crisis of the ancien régime. He was in Paris for the opening of the Estates General (May 5, 1789) and for the fall of the Bastille (July 14). In letters to divers correspondents he evinced growing and confident enthusiasm for the burgeoning revolution. To James Madison: “The revolution of France has gone on with the most unexampled success hitherto. . . .” To Thomas Paine: “The National Assembly [showed] a coolness, wisdom, and resolution to set fire the four corners of the kingdom and to perish with it themselves rather than to relinquish an iota from their plan of total change. . . .” To Paine again: “The king, queen and national assembly are removed to Paris. The mobs and murders under which [the revolutionaries] dress this fact are like the rags in which religion robes the true god.” No mere observer of the revolution, Jefferson is believed to have played a part in formulating the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, adopted by the National Assembly, the revolutionary heir to the Estates General, on August 26, 1789.

He thus became the symbol of a proposition of which he came to be a fervent apologist: that the French Revolution was the continuation and fulfillment of the American one, both being manifestations of one and the same spirit of liberty. Within a few years that proposition was to become bitterly divisive, both among the American people and among the Founding Fathers themselves. The question of policy toward France was to range Jefferson and Madison, supported by James Monroe, against Hamilton and Adams. Washington first tried to hold the balance but ultimately threw his tremendous weight decisively against the Jeffersonian theory of the continuity and kinship of the two revolutions.

The Jefferson of the early 1790s, the champion of the French Revolution, was an ardent believer in, and prophet of, civil religion in the sense adumbrated by Rousseau. That is, he sought to animate an apparently secular and political idea—that of liberty, “the true god”—by breathing into it the kinds of emotions and dispositions with which religion had been invested in the Age of Faith. Of this religion Thomas Jefferson was more than a prophet—he was a pope. As the author of the Declaration of Independence, he possessed the magisterium of liberty. He could define heresy and excommunicate heretics. To fail to acknowledge, for example, that the French Revolution was an integral part of the holy cause of liberty, along with the American Revolution, was heresy, and the heretic had to be driven from public life.

Thomas Jefferson ardently preached and energetically practiced his own version of civil religion. But is that civil religion compatible with the *American* civil religion as we know it today? In investigating that question we have to begin by asking another question: What kind of American was Thomas Jefferson?

He was a good American in the general sense; he held America and Americans to be vastly superior to Europe and Europeans, morally and socially speaking. But he was not an American nationalist, politically speaking. He was not an “America firster.” He was a “Virginia firster.” He continued to speak of Virginia as “my country” even when he was representing the United States abroad. Nor was this an isolated trick of speech. The United States was not an object that engaged his emotions; Virginia was. The Declaration of Independence was for him a sacred document, part of the civil religion of liberty. The Constitution of the United States was not; it was a political document, just about acceptable, and no more, for pragmatic reasons, and remaining acceptable only as long as the federal government respected what Virginians regarded as the limits of its authority. Federal institutions, including the presidency, were workaday things, not invested with the spiritual aura of the civil religion. Virginia remained the holy land of liberty.

In his epitaph Jefferson did not mention the fact that he had twice been President of the United States as among the significant events of his career. He did mention—along with his authorship of the Declaration of Independence—his foundation of the University of Virginia. In terms of that old dialogue between head and heart, the heart was always with Virginia, and only the head with the United States.

In political life, as in his personal emotional life, Jefferson’s head usually prevailed over his heart. But this was not always the case. When, in 1798, under President John Adams, Virginia appeared to be threatened by an excess of federal government, Jefferson encouraged Virginians to resist. Virginians and other southerners of later generations, in challenging what they perceived as the excessive claims of the federal government, were to that extent in the Jefferson tradition.

In the 1830s John C. Calhoun, the great propagator of states’-rights ideology in the antebellum South, claimed Jefferson’s authority for his “Nullification” doctrine: that states

could treat as null and void federal laws they regarded as intruding on the proper sphere of the states. Calhoun invoked as precedents the Virginia and Kentucky resolutions rejecting the Alien and Sedition Laws passed by Congress in 1798. Calhoun observed that the Kentucky resolutions were “now known to have emanated from the pen of Mr. Jefferson.”

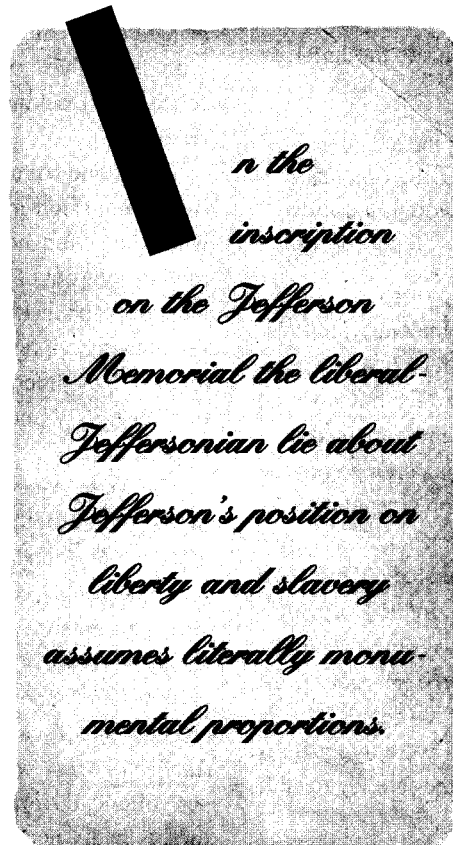
Jefferson’s authority was important to the leaders of the South in the 1830s as validating the philosophy of Nullification: a philosophy that had within it the germ of the eventual secession. But by the 1840s Nullification had come to be regarded by southerners as axiomatic (“self-evident” truths, indeed), so Jefferson’s validation was now surplus to requirements. And Jefferson was by this time becoming deeply unpopular with the more ardent defenders of southern institutions. The reason was that from the 1830s on, the hated abolitionist press had been making copious use of Jefferson’s “antislavery” writings, mainly from *Notes on the State of Virginia*. For example,

There must doubtless be an unhappy influence on the manners of our people produced by the existence of slavery among us. The whole commerce between master and slave is a perpetual exercise of the most boisterous passions, the most unremitting despotism on the one part, and degrading submissions on the other. Our children see this, and learn to imitate it; for man is an imitative animal. . . . The parent storms, the child looks on, catches the lineaments of wrath, puts on the same airs in the circle of smaller slaves, gives a loose to his worst of passions, and thus nursed, edu-

cated, and daily exercised in tyranny, cannot but be stamped by it with odious peculiarities. The man must be a prodigy who can retain his manners and morals undepraved by such circumstances.

Back in the late eighteenth century the Virginia slaveowners who were Jefferson’s contemporaries hadn’t taken this Jeffersonian antislavery seriously. They knew Jefferson personally, and knew he meant no harm. And many of them were in the habit of saying the same sorts of things themselves, in appropriate company.

By the mid nineteenth century, however, southerners had to take Jefferson’s antislavery writings seriously, because *north-erners* were taking them seriously, and using them against the South. Taking the Declaration of Independence in conjunction with Jefferson’s antislavery utterances (well publicized



in the North for more than two decades), northerners were able on the eve of the Civil War to read antislavery intentions into the Declaration of Independence itself, and thus to enlist both the Declaration and its author on their side in the coming war. In a letter of April, 1859, Lincoln wrote,

All honor to Jefferson—to the man who, in the concrete pressure of a struggle for national independence by a single people, had the coolness, forecast, and capacity to introduce into a merely revolutionary document, an abstract truth, and so to embalm it there, that today, and in all coming days, it shall be a rebuke and a stumbling block to the very harbingers of re-appearing tyranny and oppression.

This letter was really a campaign manifesto, the Jefferson scholar Merrill D. Peterson writes.

Lincoln's letter circulated freely during the presidential campaign of 1860. It was a masterpiece, the *Cincinnati Daily Gazette* declared, "the most pointed and most forcible political letter ever written . . . a platform in itself."

After the Civil War that accolade from the martyred President secured a continuing place for Jefferson in the pantheon of the American civil religion. The Jeffersonian vessel had survived the rapids of the Civil War and remained holy in the eyes of large numbers of Americans, among both the victors and the vanquished. In his posthumous reputation, as in his political career, luck was on Jefferson's side.

Still, there were always some begrudgers, and there were many more in the North than in the South. In the North after the Civil War, Hamilton, not Jefferson, was at the center of the civil religion. In the South it was Jefferson—more firmly than before the Civil War—who was at the center. That is to say, sectional and regional alignments were again for a time essentially what they had been in the late eighteenth century.

In the first half of the twentieth century the most important occurrence affecting the posthumous reputation and civil-religion status of Thomas Jefferson was the New Deal. Peterson depicts the Roosevelt Administration as building a great national temple to Jefferson's memory. The temple is the Jefferson Memorial in Washington, dedicated by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt on the two hundredth anniversary of Jefferson's birth, April 13, 1943. According to an official brochure, "Inscriptions at the memorial were selected by the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Commission and were taken from a wide variety of his writings on freedom, slavery, education and government." The section of the inscriptions that deals with freedom and slavery runs as follows:

God who gave us life gave us liberty. Can the liberties of a nation be secure when we have removed a conviction

that these liberties are the gift of God? Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just, that his justice cannot sleep forever. Commerce between master and slave is despotism. Nothing is more certainly written in the book of fate than that these people are to be free.

All of this passage except for the last sentence is taken from *Notes on the State of Virginia*. The last sentence is taken from Jefferson's *Autobiography*. That sentence, as isolated in the memorial inscription, deceives the public as to Jefferson's meaning. For the original passage in the *Autobiography* continues, "*Nor is it less certain that the two races, equally free, cannot live in the same government. Nature, habit, opinion has drawn indelible lines of distinction between them.*" (Emphasis added.)

In short, these people are to be free, and then deported. Jefferson's teaching on that matter is quite clear and often repeated.

Those who edited that inscription on behalf of the memorial commission must have known what they were doing when they wrenched that resounding sentence from the *Autobiography* out of the context that so drastically qualifies its meaning. The distortion by suppression has to be deliberate.

In that inscription on the Jefferson Memorial in Washington, D.C., the liberal-Jeffersonian lie about Jefferson's position on liberty and slavery assumes literally monumental proportions.

The quarter century following the dedication of the memorial saw Jefferson's reputation, especially as a liberal, at its height. John F. Kennedy and his liberal-intellectual entourage strongly contributed to the general and almost universal acceptance of the Jefferson Memorial. By the mid-1960s Jefferson's towering position within the American civil religion appeared assured for all time.

Peterson's invaluable work *The Jefferson Image in the American Mind* was published in 1960. By now a successor volume, covering the last decades of the twentieth century, is badly needed. In particular, a detailed study needs to be made of the impact on Jefferson's image of the civil-rights movement and ensuing changes. In default of such source material I propose to "cut to the chase," as the filmmakers say, and consider factors affecting the place of Thomas Jefferson in the American civil religion as these appear to me today. The two major factors, in my opinion, are challenges to the authority of the federal government and the race issue. These factors have been linked in earlier momentous phases of American history: in 1798, when Virginia and Kentucky were threatening revolt against federal authority; in the periods before and after the Civil War; and in the civil-rights crisis of the 1960s. They are still linked today, and they raise serious questions about the place of Thomas Jefferson in the civil religion of modern America. Let me begin with the challenge to the authority of the federal government.

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THE President's full name—William Jefferson Clinton—attests to his family's allegiance to a Jeffersonian tradition, probably through Franklin D. Roosevelt. As President-elect, Clinton affirmed his personal commitment to that tradition by a symbolic gesture: in the week of his inauguration he retraced the trip that Jefferson made as President-elect from Monticello to Washington. And Clinton's staff underlined the significance of this gesture by noting that the President-elect at this solemn moment in his life was reading a new biography of Thomas Jefferson.

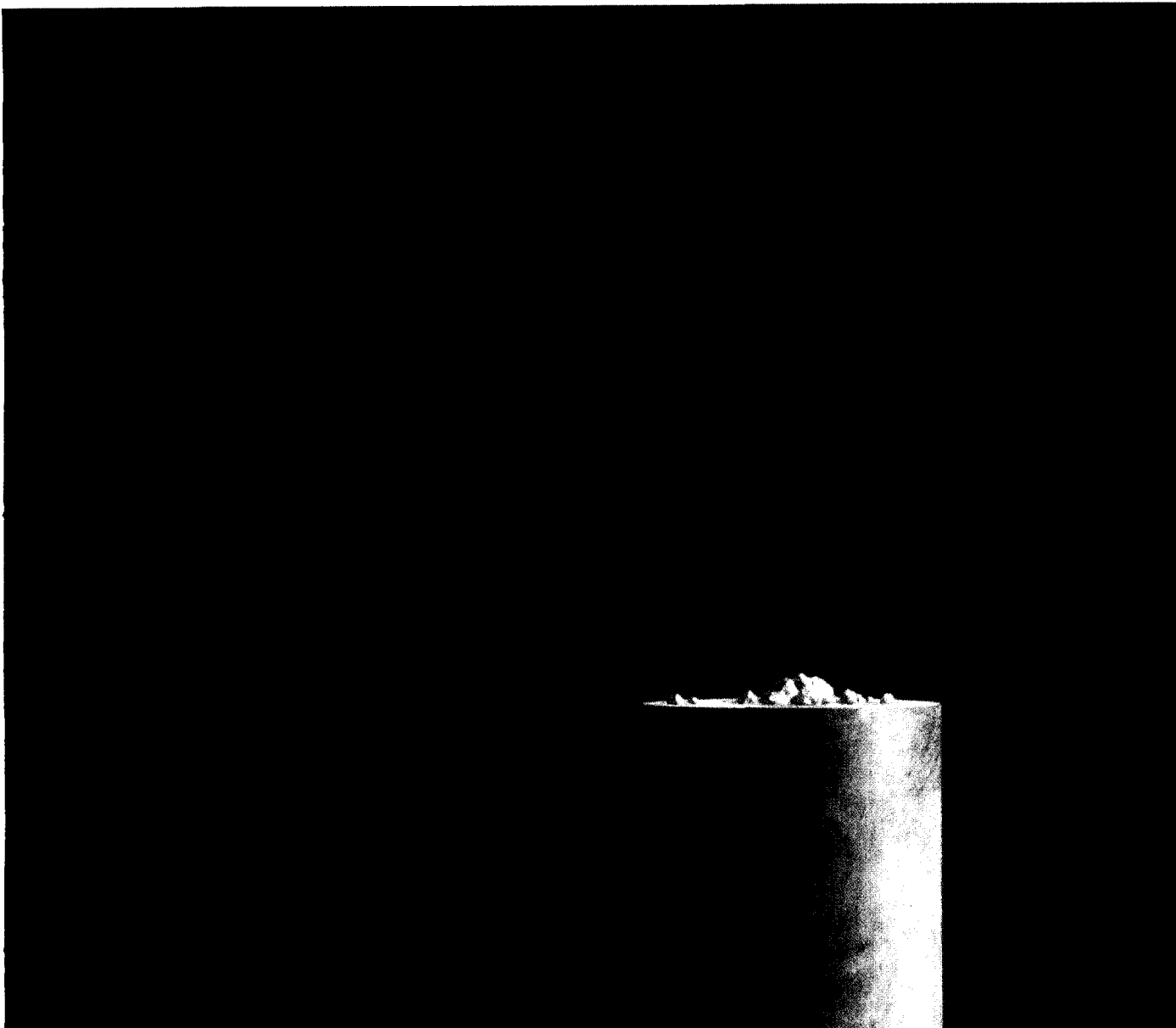
We may assume, therefore, that when Clinton warned the right-wing militias not to attempt to "appropriate our sacred symbols for paranoid purposes," the heritage of Thomas Jefferson was associated in his mind with the defense of the sacred symbols. But Jefferson is an unreliable ally in this matter. In his middle years—and even before the French Revolution—Jefferson was in the grip of a fanatical cult of liberty, which was seen as an absolute to which it would be blasphemous to assign limits. In this period—roughly 1787 to 1793—Jefferson was intoxicated with what Edmund Burke called "the wild *gas*" of liberty. That phrase occurs in Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, with the confutation of which Jefferson, as Secretary of State, managed to associate himself publicly in April of 1791, greatly to his own political advantage. The passage from which the phrase comes is worth quoting here.

When I see the spirit of liberty in action, I see a strong principle at work; and this, for a while, is all I can possibly know of it. The wild *gas*, the fixed air is plainly broke loose: but we ought to suspend our judgement until the first effervescence is a little subsided, till the liquor is cleared, and until we see something deeper than the agitation of a troubled and frothy surface. I must be tolerably sure, before I venture publicly to congratulate men upon a blessing, that they have really received one. Flattery corrupts both the receiver and the giver; and adulation is not of more service to the people than to kings. I should therefore suspend my congratulations on the new liberty of France, until I was informed how it had been combined with government; with public force; with the discipline and obedience of armies; with the collection of an effective and well-distributed revenue; with morality and religion; with the solidity of property; with peace and order; with civil and social manners. All these (in their way) are good things too; and, without them, liberty is not a benefit whilst it lasts, and is not likely to continue long. The effect of liberty to individuals is, that they may do what they please: We ought to see what it will please them to do, before we risque congratulations, which may be soon turned into complaints.

In America the holy cause of liberty became "combined with government" through the enactment and acceptance of the Constitution. Washington, Adams, and Hamilton were

all spiritually Burkeans; so was Madison, while he worked with Hamilton on the *Federalist* papers and before he fell under the Jeffersonian spell, from 1790 on. These Founders were Burkeans not in that they got their ideas from Burke but in that the principles on which they worked were identical with those enunciated by Burke in the passage above.

In resisting the enterprise of the right-wing militias, who are also libertarian extremists, President Clinton has most of the Founders, and the Constitution itself, on his side. But Jefferson is different. The liberty that Jefferson adored is not a liberty "combined" with all those tedious Burkean things, as in the Constitution, but a wild liberty, absolute, untrammelled, universal, the liberty of a great revolutionary manifesto: the Declaration of Independence. The other Founders saw the Declaration as embodying generalities that would at a later stage need to be combined with and confined by practical considerations. But Jefferson saw the principles of the Declaration as



transcendent truths of which he himself, as author of the Declaration, was also the destined and authoritative interpreter.

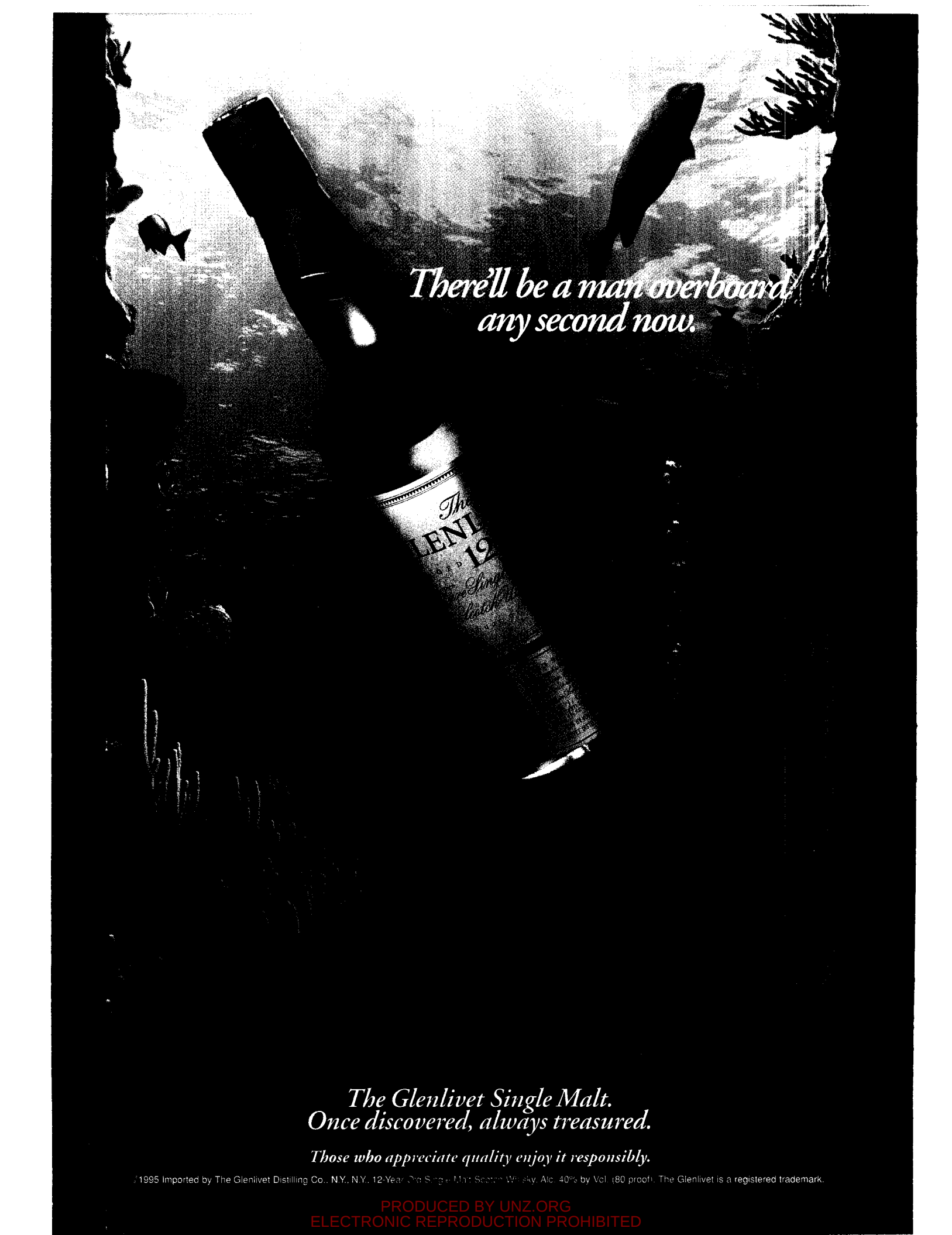
Even before the French Revolution—and even before the American Constitution—Jefferson had approved keeping the spirit of armed rebellion alive in America and elsewhere. In the context of Shays's Rebellion in Massachusetts, in 1787, Jefferson wrote, "God forbid we should ever be 20 years without such a rebellion. . . . The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants. It is its natural manure."

That is something very like a Jeffersonian charter for the most militant segment of the modern American militias, is it not? If President Clinton is relying on the authority of Thomas Jefferson to keep those sacred symbols out of the clutches of paranoid militias, the President can be refuted out of the mouth of the very authority he invokes.

Jefferson's enthusiasm for what later came to be called

permanent revolution antedates the French Revolution. But the advent of the French Revolution fortified and exalted that enthusiasm. In propagating the cause of the French Revolution in America, and incorporating it with the American Revolution into a single holy cause of freedom, one of the things Jefferson was doing was emancipating the cause of freedom from the limits set on it in America by the Constitution. The holy cause was now universal, and transcended the limits of any merely local legislation. The French Revolution couldn't be told that it was in breach of the American Constitution, so the cult of the French Revolution clipped the Constitution's wings. There were indeed *no* limits that could be assigned to the holy cause of freedom—neither geographic boundaries nor conventional ideas of morality and compassion.

In his well-known "Adam and Eve" letter to William Short, the American chargé d'affaires in Paris, the Secretary of State instructed that squeamish diplomatist (and defector from the



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ideals of his patron Jefferson) to stop complaining about French revolutionary atrocities: "My own affections have been deeply wounded by some of the martyrs of this cause, but rather than it should have failed, I would have seen half the earth desolated. Were there but an Adam and Eve, left in every country, and left free, it would be better than it now is." Short should accept that there was no limit (except the sparing of two persons per nation) to the slaughter that might legitimately be perpetrated in the holy cause of freedom. And the letter to Short is not—as Jefferson apologists like to imply—an isolated flash of hyperbole. It is a follow-up to *Notes of a Conversation With George Washington on French Affairs*, in which Jefferson recorded that faith in the French Revolution was his "polar star," and that he believed Washington to be a belated convert to that faith. Jefferson set out in his letter to Short the merciless and almost limitless exigencies of polar faith.

Those in the culture of the modern American militias who see themselves as at war, or on the verge of war, with the federal government are fanatical believers in liberty, as Jefferson was. Jefferson condoned French revolutionary atrocities on a far greater scale, numerically, than the 1995 massacre in Oklahoma City. The Adam and Eve letter was written after the news had reached America of the murder of more than a thousand helpless people by the Paris mobs in the September massacres of 1792. After September, as before, the French Revolution remained Jefferson's polar star. Philip Freneau, Jefferson's protégé, an employee at the Department of State, explicitly defended the execution of Louis XVI in the *National Gazette*—at that date the principal organ of Jefferson's Republican Party, and under Jefferson's direct and active patronage in Philadelphia.

It is true that Jefferson later condemned "the atrocities of Robespierre." But that was in 1795, and Robespierre (who did not order the September massacres) was not only dead but anathema to the new masters of the French Revolution. While Robespierre was alive and the Terror was actually raging, Jefferson had no comment to offer on French revolutionary atrocities. When Madison informed Jefferson, in a letter, of the massacre of the Brissotins (Girondins) in October of 1793, Jefferson, in a longish reply, made no reference to that transaction. Presumably all such matters were still covered by the Adam and Eve doctrine of six months earlier.

THE LESSON OF SAINT-DOMINIQUE

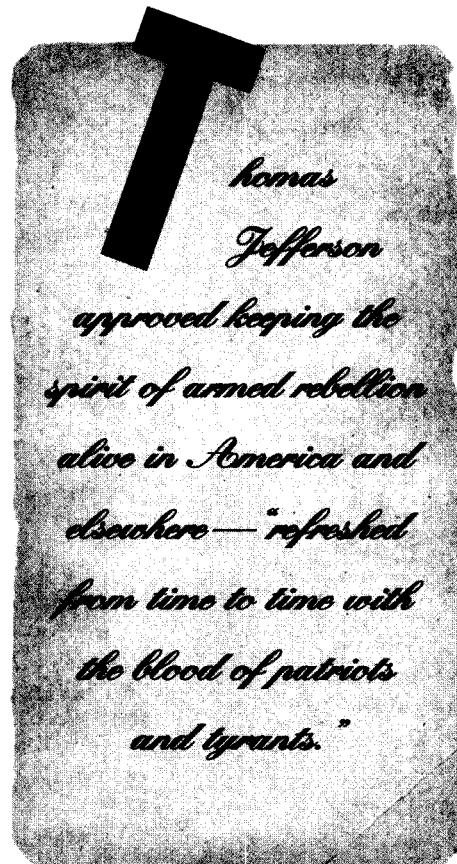
TRUE, there was a pragmatist in Jefferson as well as a visionary fanatic, and the pragmatist acquired the upper hand over the visionary in the late 1790s. Of this phenomenon Robert Bellah, the leading authority on the American civil religion, writes, somewhat misleadingly,

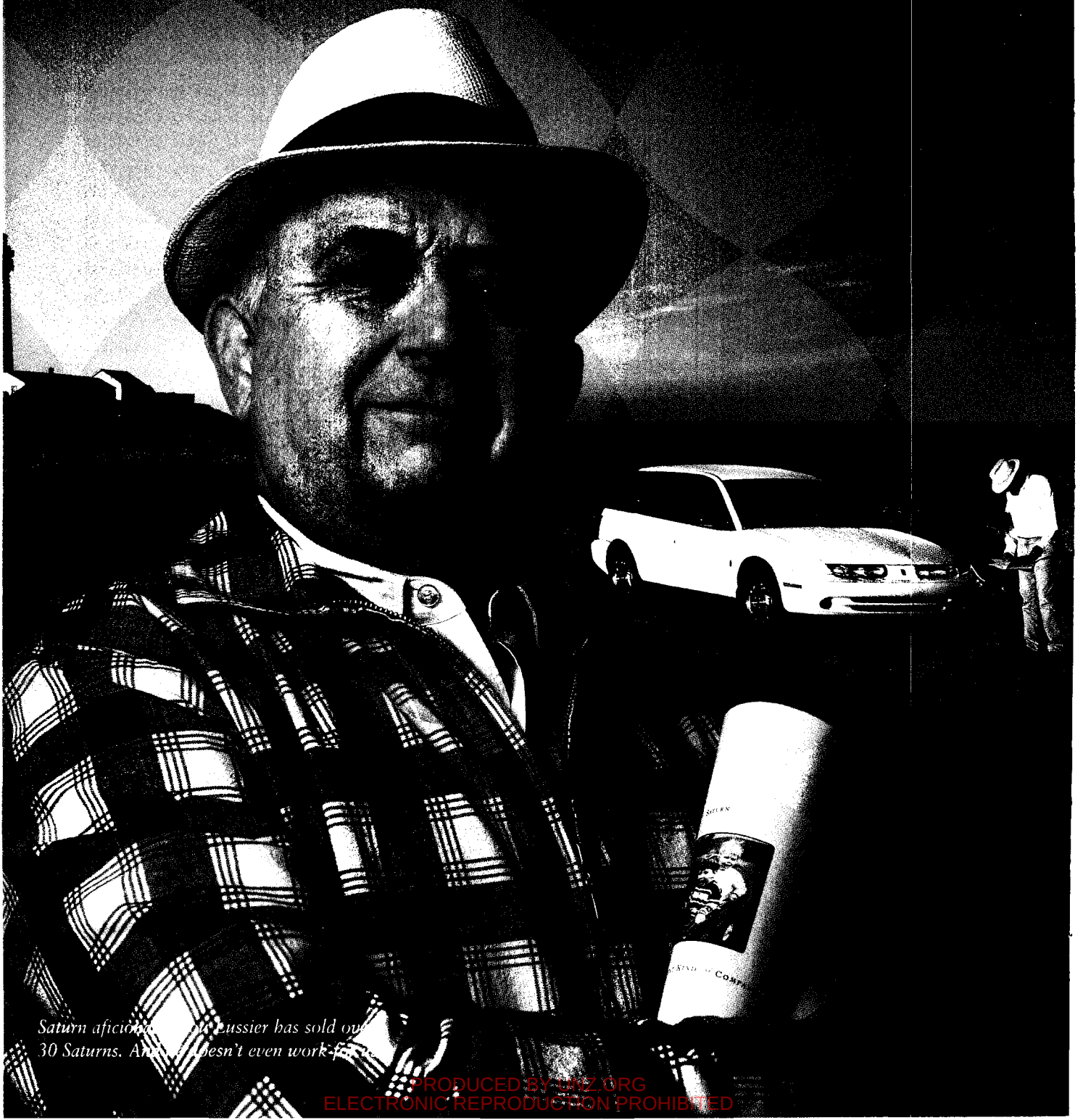
Early in the history of the new nation there had been a deep revulsion against the excesses of the French Revolution and a tendency to contrast it with the moderate and humane character of the American Revolution. Such a contrast was stated most vigorously by the early Federalists but was in some form or other accepted by Jeffersonian Democrats as well.

In reality the deep revulsion against the excesses of the French Revolution (while they were happening) was exclusively a Federalist affair. The Republicans, headed by Jefferson himself, stoutly defended the French Revolution throughout the period when reports of the excesses were reaching America. If possible, anything horrible in the reports from Paris was ascribed by Republicans to the manipulation of the news by the British. In private the esoteric doctrine of the Republican leaders—as revealed by Jefferson to William Short—was that what the Federalists called excesses were really taking place but were entirely justifiable, however drastic, because they were undertaken in the cause of liberty.

The Republicans began to detach themselves from the cause of the French Revolution after 1793, and especially from 1795 on. But this was not because Jefferson and the rest of them were belatedly experiencing some form of revulsion against excesses that they had systematically condoned (often by denying their existence) at the time of their perpetration. The detachment was, rather, the result of a growing perception in 1794–1795 that enthusiasm among the American people for the French Revolution was cooling—not only because of those excesses, which were at their worst during the period when Americans other than Federalists were most enthusiastic about the French Revolution, but also because of developments in the United States itself and in a neighboring territory, Saint-Domingue, or Haiti, and because of Washington's influence.

Those developments included the victory of the black





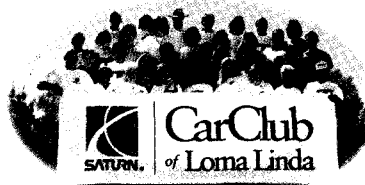
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slaves in Haiti and the ensuing carnage and dispersion of the whites. The exact nature of the connection between the black insurrection and the French Revolution remains open to argument. But it would have been hard for slaveowners to remain enthusiastic about the French Revolution after February of 1794, when the French National Convention, then dominated by Robespierre, decreed the emancipation of all slaves in the dominions of the French Republic.

The emancipating act was probably not the least of “the atrocities of Robespierre” in the eyes of Virginia slaveowners, including Thomas Jefferson.

After these events Jefferson and his colleagues realized that the cause of the French Revolution, formerly a major political asset to them in the United States, had become a liability. So they cut their losses. They never repudiated the French Revolution, still cherished by many of their rank and file, but it was as if this part of their political stock in trade had been removed from the front window.

By the time Jefferson became President, the pragmatist had prevailed over the visionary, head over heart, in this matter. Yet when we are talking about the American civil religion and its sacred symbols, the visionary in Jefferson, the champion of the French Revolution, remains disturbingly—and subversively—alive and relevant. Jefferson does not fit into the modern American civil religion as *officially and semi-officially expounded*. The official version involves, as James Smylie has put it, “divine sanction in the use of power and in the support of civil authority.” That is not what the *Jeffersonian* civil religion is about. But other versions of the civil religion are extant in modern America—even if official America, and the textbooks written for it, take no cognizance of their existence.

Some people seem to feel that since the militia rebels are right-wing, they cannot be Jeffersonians. But the tree of liberty is a mystical, abstract, absolute entity knowing nothing of mundane political distinctions. It accepts its natural manure, the blood of patriots and tyrants. Which are the patriots and which the tyrants makes no difference to the quality of the manure or the health of the bloodthirsty organism that feeds on it.

It is now known that three of the initial suspects in the Oklahoma City bombing claim Jeffersonian inspiration. In an article about the second man charged with the bombing, Terry Lynn Nichols, Serge F. Kovaleski wrote in *The Washington Post* last year, “[Nichols] read the works of Thomas Jefferson and Thomas Paine and was particularly inspired by Jefferson’s maxim ‘The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants.’”

CNN, on January 31 of this year, broadcast a news item about Timothy McVeigh that was accompanied by the teaser “McVeigh’s Shirt Expected to Be Key Evidence.” In the course of a discussion of the shirt, the following remarks were made:

Susan Candiotti (CNN correspondent): “Sources tell CNN when Tim McVeigh was arrested driving away from

Oklahoma City on the day of the bombing, he was wearing a T-shirt emblazoned with words of rebellion and bloodshed. McVeigh’s shirt bore this quotation—‘The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants.’ The words were written by Thomas Jefferson shortly after the American Revolution, when some people felt threatened by their new federal government.” (The words were actually written in November of 1787, before the federal government came into existence, and they were about a rebellion against the State of Massachusetts.)

Dr. Steven Hochman (identified as a Jefferson scholar): “What Jefferson is saying is that it is a fact that in order to preserve freedom, you’re going to have a situation where there is violence—as a wake-up call, you might say, to the leaders.”

Susan Candiotti: “At the jail in Perry, Oklahoma, where McVeigh was first taken, the FBI asked for the clothing he was wearing but described the T-shirt in a way that kept the wording secret until now. CNN has been told the words are visible in McVeigh’s mug shot taken at the jail. The FBI seized the only copy of that photo and will not release it. McVeigh’s lawyer brushed aside any concern over the T-shirt slogan when we asked him, How incriminating is this?”

Stephen Jones (McVeigh’s lawyer): “Well, if Thomas Jefferson said it, I shouldn’t think it would be incriminating at all.”

SLAVERY

AMONG revisionist scholarly threats to Jefferson’s place in the American pantheon is the work of William Cohen. His 1969 article “Thomas Jefferson and the Problem of Slavery” is valuable principally for its analysis of Jefferson’s position on free Negroes and escaped slaves and of the solution Jefferson proposed—“colonization”—but especially for Cohen’s final summation of the contradictions in Jefferson’s position on race and slavery.

Cohen considers some 1776 legislative proposals of Jefferson’s, of which the most significant were those that introduced new restrictions and penalties applying to free Negroes and to “miscegenation” involving white women. He writes,

In November 1776, Jefferson was chosen as a member of a committee whose task was to revise, modernize, and codify the statutes of Virginia. Among his assignments was the job of drawing up the legislation dealing with slaves. He later described this bill, which he completed in 1778, as a “mere digest” of the existing legislation on the subject, and to a certain extent this was true. . . .

Nevertheless, the bill was more than a digest of earlier codes and it contained some significant additions which were designed to prevent the increase of the state’s free Negro population. It was to be illegal for free Negroes to come into Virginia of their own accord or to remain there for more than one year after they were emancipated. A

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white woman having a child by a Negro would be required to leave the state within a year. The individual who violated these regulations would be placed "out of the protection of the laws." This would have left them subject to re-enslavement or even to murder at the whim of their neighbors and was, therefore, a most severe punishment.

As eventually passed by the Virginia legislature, in 1785, the revising act did not contain Jefferson's "significant additions." It would seem that Jefferson's abhorrence of the presence of free Negroes, and of white women who gave birth to children of mixed race, was stronger than was normal among contemporaries of his own class. Jefferson probably treated his slaves somewhat better than other slaveowners did, but he seems to have been at least as harsh as other landowners in his treatment of slaves who escaped and were recaptured. Cohen writes,

When he dealt with runaways, sales of slaves, breeding, flogging, and manumissions, his behavior did not differ appreciably from that of other enlightened slaveholders who deplored needless cruelty, but would use whatever means they felt necessary to protect their peculiar form of property.

During Jefferson's adult lifetime, more than forty of his Negroes attempted to escape. . . .

In early September 1805, Jame Hubbard, a stout Negro who worked in the plantation nail factory, ran away, but was soon apprehended and returned. About five years later he escaped again. A year passed before Jefferson learned that Hubbard was living in the area of Lexington and dispatched Isham Chisolm to retrieve the bondsman. It was too late, however; Hubbard had departed only a few days earlier for parts unknown. When Chisolm returned empty-handed, Jefferson offered him a bonus of twenty-five dollars to go after the man a second time. This time Hubbard was caught and brought back in irons, and Jefferson reported: "I had him severely flogged in the presence of his old companions. . . ." He then added that he was convinced that Hubbard "will never again serve any man as a slave, the moment he is out of jail and his irons off he will be off himself." Before Jefferson could implement plans to have him sold out of the state, Hubbard disappeared again.

In theory Jefferson's "solution" to slavery consisted in "colonization": the deportation of all the freed blacks from the United States, preferably back to Africa. Cohen:

The entire body of Jefferson's writings shows that he never seriously considered the possibility of any form of racial coexistence on the basis of equality and that, from at least 1778 until his death, he saw colonization as the only alternative to slavery.

Late in his life, however, Jefferson began to admit the impracticability of this solution, at least in its widest sense, while reiterating his faith in an attenuated form of it. Cohen writes,

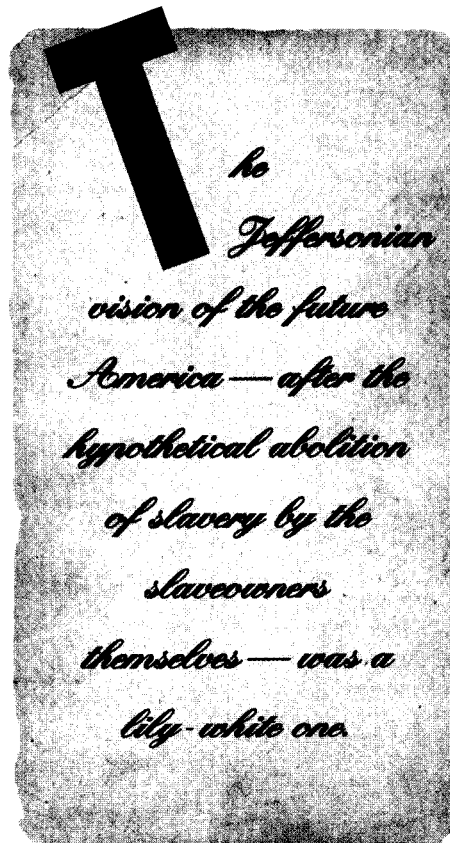
In 1824 Jefferson argued that there were a million and a half slaves in the nation and that no one conceived it to be "practicable for us, or expedient for them" to send all the blacks away at once. He then went on to calculate:

Their estimated value as property, in the first place, (for actual property has been lawfully vested in that form, and who can lawfully take it from the possessors?) at an average of two hundred dollars each . . . would amount to six hundred millions of dollars which must be paid or lost by somebody. To this add the cost of their transportation by land and sea to Mesurado [the west coast of Liberia], a year's provision of food and clothes, implements of husbandry and of their trades, which will amount to three hundred millions more . . . and it is impossible to look at the question a second time.

Since African colonization seemed an impossibility, Jefferson suggested a plan which entailed "emancipating the afterborn, leaving them, on due compensation,

with their mothers, until their services are worth their maintenance, and putting them to industrious occupations until a proper age for deportation." The individuals who would be "freed" immediately after their birth would eventually be sent to Santo Domingo which, according to the newspapers, had recently offered to open its doors to such persons. In effect, Jefferson was proposing that the federal government buy all newborn slaves from their owners (at twelve dollars and fifty cents each) and that it pay for their "nurture with the mother [for] a few years." Beyond this, the plan would not cost the government anything, for the young blacks would then work for their maintenance until deported. Santo Domingo had offered to bear the cost of passage.

Jefferson noted that a majority of Americans then living would live to see the black population reach six million



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and warned that "a million and a half are within their control; but six millions, . . . and one million of these fighting men, will say, 'we will not go.'" The Virginia statesman concluded his proposal by urging that neither constitutional problems nor human sentiment ought to be allowed to stand in its way:

I am aware that this subject involves some constitutional scruples. But a liberal construction, justified by the object, may go far, and an amendment of the constitution, the whole length necessary. The separation of infants from their mothers, too, would produce some scruples of humanity. But this would be straining at a gnat, and swallowing a camel.

Thus, only two and a half years before his death, Jefferson reiterated his long held belief that emancipation was imperative for the sake of the nation, but that it must be accompanied by colonization. Even here, however, his theory differed from his practice; and in this case his inconsistency would follow him beyond the grave for he did not offer to free his slaves on the condition that they leave the country. On the contrary, in his will he requested the Virginia legislature to grant special permission to the five slaves he manumitted to continue to live in the state.

In his conclusion Cohen provides a succinct summation of the contradictions in Jefferson's position with regard to slavery and free Negroes. He writes,

Jefferson was a man of many dimensions, and any explanation of his behavior must contain a myriad of seeming contradictions. He was a sincere and dedicated foe of the slave trade who bought and sold men whenever he found it personally necessary. He believed that all men were entitled to life and liberty regardless of their abilities, yet he tracked down those slaves who had the courage to take their rights by running away. He believed that slavery was morally and politically wrong, but still he wrote a slave code for his state and opposed a national attempt in 1819 to limit the further expansion of the institution. He believed that one hour of slavery was worse than ages of British oppression, yet he was able to discuss the matter of slave breeding in much the same terms that one would use when speaking of the propagation of dogs and horses.

THE EVIDENCE ON RACE

MODERN America is, and has been for more than a quarter of a century, a postracist society, juridically and institutionally and in the ethos of all its establishments: political, social, financial, academic, scientific, and—not least significant—athletic. The American civil religion, if it is to be a bonding force through the coming century, must be unequivocally multiracial. I am not sure that it is yet. The civil religion has been implicitly or ex-

plicitly a religion of white people for most of its history. I am not sure whether it has by now lived down that past. But obviously it must do so in the coming century if it is to remain a civil religion for the American people as a whole. There are—as in other Western countries—powerful racist undercurrents still around. But for both reasons, because this is officially a postracist society *and* because the racist undercurrents are still there, Thomas Jefferson is becoming a most unsuitable and embarrassing figure in the pantheon of the modern American civil religion. For Thomas Jefferson was demonstrably a racist, and a particularly aggressive and vindictive one at that.

I don't mean that Jefferson was a racist because he owned slaves. A person might own slaves in the conditions of the eighteenth century without being a racist. The person might simply have inherited slaves, and not quite know what to do about it. I believe that Washington, who manumitted all his slaves by his will, was in that category. (Jefferson manumitted only the five young Hemingses, who were probably his own children, and two others.) I am not aware of any utterances of Washington's that could reasonably be classed as racist. Washington did not, as Jefferson did (in Query XIV of *Notes on the State of Virginia*), go on about such topics as the supposed preference of black males for white women, as compared with the supposed preference of orangutans for black women. Nor did Washington display, as Jefferson did (most obsessively in Query XIV), the classic racist itch to identify black characteristics that might be interpreted as indicative of genetic inferiority.

It is precisely Jefferson's status as the oracle of liberty within the American civil religion that is becoming unsustainable in a postracist America. Consider the implications of the story of Jame Hubbard. Hubbard's sole offense was to claim liberty for himself and try to win it. For that offense Jefferson had him "severely flogged in the presence of his old companions." For many Americans today (I would hope for most Americans, and most other people), the hero of liberty in that story is not the famous Thomas Jefferson but the otherwise unknown Jame Hubbard. And that perception has ominous implications for the future status of Thomas Jefferson in the civil religion of a postracist and increasingly multiracial America.

The factor, however, that is bound eventually to eliminate a personal cult of Thomas Jefferson from America's civil religion is not his record in relation to slaves and slavery but the policy laid down by him in relation to "free Negroes." Jefferson's vision of the future America—after the hypothetical abolition of slavery by the slaveowners themselves—was a lily-white one. All the ex-slaves were to be deported to Africa. In the meantime, free blacks had to be eliminated from Virginia. Jefferson's proposals for their elimination were too draconian to be stomached even by his fellow slaveowners. His proposed (and rejected) amendments to the Virginia legal code included

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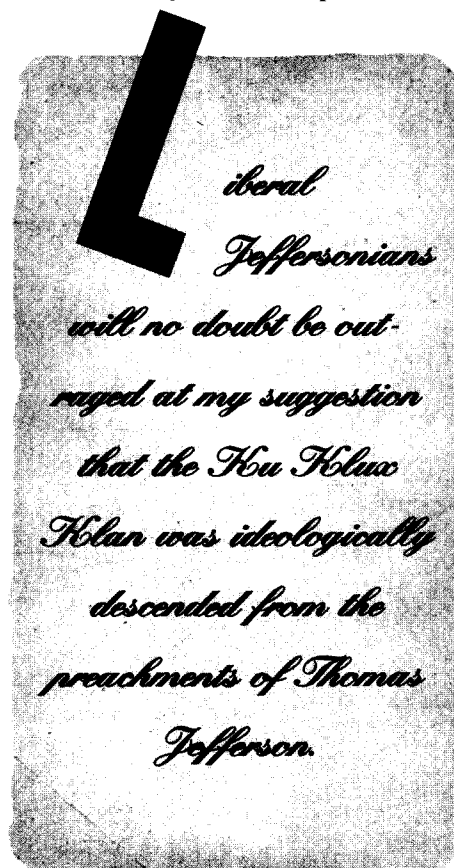
a recommendation for penalizing what Virginia slaveowners called miscegenation, by which they always meant sexual intercourse between black men and white women, never between white men and black women—an event of frequent but unmentionable occurrence. Jefferson made provision for the case of a white woman who might bear a mulatto child. Both the mother and her child were to leave Virginia within a year of the birth. In the event of their failure to do so, mother and child were declared to be “out of the protection of the laws.” In the circumstances that proposition was a license for lynching—for the physical destruction of mother and child by any Virginian who might care to do the job. Volunteers would not be lacking.

Jefferson’s white contemporaries refused to accept that sinister recommendation. But later generations of southerners were to act in its spirit. It is no coincidence that Jefferson was much more popular in the South after the Civil War than he had been before. Before the war the issue had been slavery, and Jefferson was a bit unsound on that by the standards prevailing in the South in the immediate antebellum period. After the war, however, the question of the hour for white southerners was the status of free blacks. And on *that* Thomas Jefferson was absolutely sound.

It is true that after the war white southerners were in no position to achieve Jefferson’s ideal solution: the deportation of all emancipated blacks. But they could and did act in the spirit of Jefferson’s major premise in this matter: they could ensure that there would be no free blacks in the southern states. Any black who attempted to achieve real freedom was at best treated as Jefferson had treated Jame Hubbard. Penalties more drastic than flogging, however, were available against persons perceived as guilty of serious racial misconduct. Such people were “out of the protection of the laws.” That is, they could be lynched with perfect impunity. And they were, regularly and in large numbers, after the end of Reconstruction and through the first two decades of the twentieth century.

For all this the enforcers of white supremacy claimed, and with justice, a mandate in Thomas Jefferson’s well-known doctrine that there was no place for free blacks in American society. If blacks were emancipated and yet remained in America and in the South, then they had to be brought under restraint.

Perhaps the most vocal of the southern white supremacists in the late nineteenth century was the Populist leader Tom Watson, of Georgia. Watson’s magazine *The Jeffersonian* propagated, according to Merrill Peterson, “sectional and racial hatred of the most vicious sort.” The relation of *The Jeffersonian* to Jefferson’s thought was similar to the relation of the Republican press in Jefferson’s own time to Jefferson’s thought. *The Jeffersonian*, like the Republican press, propagated in crude emotive forms ideas to which the master had given discreet and overtly unemotional expression. And in the southern states in the years after the Civil War the whites who most practiced what *The Jeffersonian* was preaching were members of the Ku Klux Klan.



LIBERAL JEFFERSONIANS

LIBERAL Jeffersonians will no doubt be outraged at my suggestion that the Ku Klux Klan was ideologically descended from Thomas Jefferson. I hope liberal Jeffersonians *are* outraged, and I propose to go on outraging them. I intend, if possible, to outrage them out of existence: not out of physical existence, of course, but out of existence as the confused and confusing school of thought they actually constitute. For “liberal Jeffersonian” is a contradiction in terms—at least it is if you think that “liberal racist” is a contradiction in terms. And modern American liberals can hardly contest that last point.

In the 1970s and 1980s American liberals were greatly exercised about apartheid in South Africa, and were busy tracking down any person who might conceivably have given any kind of aid or comfort to that iniquitous system. In that connection, how about Thomas Jefferson? The Jeffersonian doctrine of no free blacks in America was a doctrine of apartheid for America.

Someone should write a thesis on “The Influence of Thomas Jefferson on Hendrik Verwoerd.”

What is surprising about Jeffersonian liberalism is that it has managed (so far) to survive both the comprehensive discrediting of racism among the educated and in official America in the second half of the twentieth century *and* the scholarly work that demonstrates that Jefferson was a racist. Thus as late as 1984 we find Richard Matthews writing in *The Radical Politics of Thomas Jefferson: A Revisionist View*, “Jefferson . . . not only presents a radical critique of

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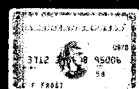
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American market society but also provides an image for—if not a road-map to—a consciously made, legitimately democratic American future.” A legitimately democratic American future without any blacks in it.

I believe that in the next century, as blacks and Hispanics and Asians acquire increasing influence in American society, the Jeffersonian liberal tradition, which is already intellectually untenable, will become socially and politically untenable as well. I also believe that the American civil religion, official version—let me call it ACROV—will have to be reformed in a manner that will downgrade and eventually exclude Thomas Jefferson. Finally, I believe that Jefferson will nonetheless continue to be a power in America in the area where the mystical side of Jefferson really belongs: among the radical, violent, anti-federal libertarian fanatics—the very same paranoid conspirators against whose grasp President Clinton is rightly resolved to defend our sacred symbols.

THE IMPENDING SCHISM

AS the twenty-first century advances, there will be changes within the American civil religion to correspond to great changes in the society itself. The multiracial character of the society will be increasingly realized, as significant numbers of blacks, Hispanics, and Asians move up the economic ladder. Women of all races will also be moving up, in many cases even faster and higher than the general rate of ascent of nonwhite people.

In these circumstances ACROV will be needed more than ever, as a bonding force for a more and more visibly diverse society and polity. But within ACROV the cult of the Founding Fathers will be affected. The present campus assaults on the authority, in every field, of “dead white males” are often absurd, but they have their implications for the future, and in particular for the cult of the Founding Fathers.

In the new circumstances the emphasis is likely to be increasingly on documents, rather than personalities, as the core of ACROV. Of the two main documents, the Constitution presents no problems for the new societal coalition, in which women and nonwhite people exercise increasing authority. The Constitution as it now stands is the work not just of Founding Fathers but of many kinds of people, over many generations. Both abolitionists and feminists—overlapping categories in the nineteenth century—played their part in bringing the Constitution into the shape in which we have it today. The Constitution will be amended—an Equal Rights Amendment would appear to be inevitable, if present trends continue—during the first half of the coming century. The Constitution—amended and amendable—will be at the center of ACROV.

The Declaration of Independence is another matter. ACROV without the Declaration is unthinkable. The Declaration is the primary assertion of American nationalism, and

the primary function of the American civil religion is to invest American nationalism with the aura of the sacred. Without the Declaration, then, there is no American civil religion.

Yet there are problems about the Declaration, in its relation to a society no longer exclusively dominated by whites. There are problems about the wording, and problems about the authorship. It is accepted that the words “all men are created equal” do not in their literal meaning apply to women, and were not intended by the Founding Fathers (collectively) to apply to slaves. Yet it is also accepted that the expectations aroused by this formula have been a force that eventually changed the meaning of the formula to include women and people of all races.

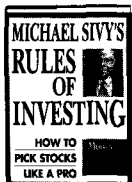
The wording in itself offers no basic difficulty. The trouble is in the relation of the wording to the perceived authorship. In ACROV as we know it in the twentieth century, Jefferson has sacred status as the author of the most sacred document: the Declaration of Independence. And nothing is more certain than that Thomas Jefferson did not intend that black people should be free in America. Freedom and blackness were incompatible in America: free blacks were to be banished.

For many years Jefferson’s real views concerning the future of blacks in America were hidden by soothing obfuscation best exemplified by the relevant inscription in the Jefferson Memorial. People were told that Thomas Jefferson was against slavery, and his words to that effect were quoted frequently. But people were *not* told that for Jefferson, black people had no future in America at all *except as slaves*. Once they ceased to be slaves, they were to be sent packing. Nor would other nonwhites be welcome (the American Indian excepted, whom Jefferson was at pains to “whiten”). Jefferson’s bright vision of the future of America was a monoracial one: whites only.

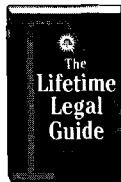
It follows that there can be no room for a cult of Thomas Jefferson in the civil religion of an effectively multiracial America—that is, an America in which nonwhite Americans have a significant and increasing say. Once the facts are known, Jefferson is of necessity abhorrent to people who would not be in America at all if he could have had his way.

Those people don’t need Jefferson. But they do need the Declaration. The words “all men are created equal” are an important part of their American title deeds. Racists hold that blacks are genetically inferior—that is, that they were *not* created equal. Against that doctrine it is important to be able to invoke the most sacred of American documents.

In these circumstances, in which the Declaration is needed and Jefferson is not, I would expect to see a change in the perceived relation between Jefferson and the Declaration. There is an element of exaggeration in the present official perception of that relation, and that exaggeration will come under attack in the increasingly multiracial climate of the coming century.



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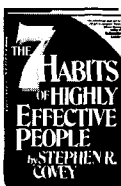
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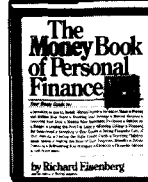
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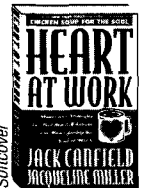
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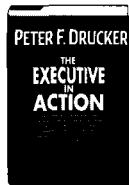
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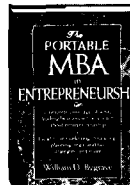
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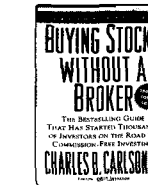
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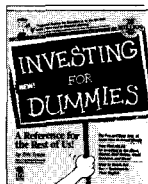
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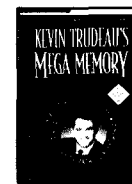
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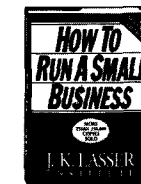
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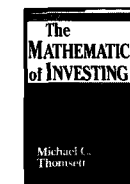
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The crucial question is, Was Thomas Jefferson the author of the Declaration of Independence?

Many Americans will answer that question with an indignant “Of course he was!” Yet there is really no “of course” about it. The Declaration was certainly not the unaided work of Thomas Jefferson. The document did not spring fully formed from his head, like Athena from the forehead of Zeus. The work of preparing the Declaration—to justify the independence that the Second Continental Congress had actually proclaimed two days before—was entrusted by Congress not to Jefferson alone but to a committee that included John Adams and Benjamin Franklin, figures of no less status in the America of 1776. Adams and Franklin would probably have had considerable input into discussions preceding the actual drafting of the document. Jefferson’s draft was reviewed and corrected by the committee prior to being laid before the Congress, whose consensus it was designed to reflect. And the Congress made further changes in the draft. Carl Lotus Becker writes in *The Declaration of Independence: A Study in the History of Political Ideas*,

Congress discussed his draft for three successive days. What uncomplimentary remarks the members may have made is not known; but it is known that in the end certain paragraphs were greatly changed and others omitted altogether. These “depredations”—so he speaks of them—Jefferson did not enjoy; but we may easily console ourselves for his discomfort since it moved the humane Franklin to tell him a story. Writing in 1818, Jefferson says: “I was sitting by Dr. Franklin, who perceived that I was not insensible to these mutilations. I have made it a rule, said he, whenever in my power, to avoid becoming the draughtsman of papers to be reviewed by a public body.”

Franklin’s story follows, and though it is amusing, it is not relevant here. What is relevant is the word “draughtsman,” and it is evident that it was in that role, and not the more exalted role of “author,” that Jefferson’s colleagues envisaged him, in relation to the collective elaboration of the Declaration of Independence.

In ACROV as it evolves under the conditions of the coming century, the Declaration will increasingly be seen as a collective document. The Founding Fathers will have declined in importance in comparison with the sacred documents, but their *collective* authority will still be found to be vastly more acceptable than the idea of the personal authorship of Thomas Jefferson.

With the Declaration increasingly perceived as a collective document, Jefferson may increasingly be cast in the prosaic and subordinate role of draftsman. Jefferson’s demotion from the sacred status of author of the Declaration of Independence would effectively put an end to the official cult of Jefferson within the American civil religion. Jefferson should be out of ACROV, I would guess, before the middle of the coming century.

Jefferson should be out of ACROV. But he is likely to be at the center of an alternative, and powerful, version of American civil religion.

It is safe to predict that the liberal-Jeffersonian tradition will become extinct fairly early in the coming century. The huge contradiction within that tradition with regard to race renders it unfit to survive in a multiracial society. But the inevitable rejection of Jefferson by liberals in a multiracial America will draw increasingly favorable attention to Jefferson on the far right. The very reasons for which liberals will have to reject him will compel the far right to adopt him. Or rather *re-adopt* him, for he was a hero to southern white supremacists.

Doctrinally, Jefferson is a patron saint far more suitable to white supremacists than to modern American liberals. The themes of states’ rights and no free blacks in America fit the positions of the far-right militia movement like a glove. Tom Watson’s old title *The Jeffersonian* could well be revived in the next century, and with the same racist content.

Rhetorically and emotionally also, the mystical Jefferson—the Jefferson of the tree of liberty and of the French Revolution—meets the needs of the modern far right. Jefferson’s liberty, a powerfully emotive concept, unanalyzed and without intellectual content, is the kind of liberty the militias love: Burke’s “wild gas” of liberty.

The Jefferson who admired Shays’s rebels and hoped they would find imitators in later generations, and who inspired the Virginia and Kentucky resolutions of 1798, is providing those who now resist the federal government with clear warrant for their cause, and for the use of armed force should the incursions of the federal government make that necessary.

Finally, the Jefferson who made a cult of the French Revolution provides aid and comfort not just to the far right in government but to the most ferocious militant extremists. In the paroxysms of his enthusiasm for the French Revolution, in January of 1793, Jefferson laid down the principle that there are (virtually) no limits to the slaughter that may legitimately be perpetrated in the name of liberty—so that anyone in modern America who is planning any act of mass destruction may invoke the sanction of “the author of the Declaration of Independence,” provided only that the act is deemed to be perpetrated in the holy cause of liberty.

For these and other reasons I believe that at some time in the coming century the cult of Jefferson may, as it were, split off from its present home in ACROV and find a new home on the wilder shores of American freedom.

I believe that the orthodox multiracial version of the American civil religion must eventually prevail—at whatever cost—against the neo-Jeffersonian racist schism. That the orthodox version should prevail is vital not only for America but also for the future of nonracial democracy, and of Enlightenment values generally, in those parts of the world where these are now dominant or where people are struggling to bring them into effective being. ☸



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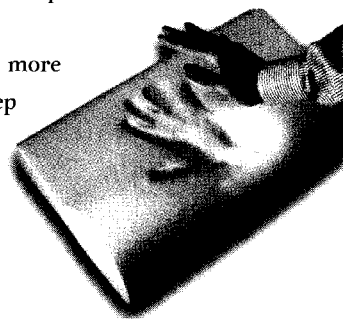
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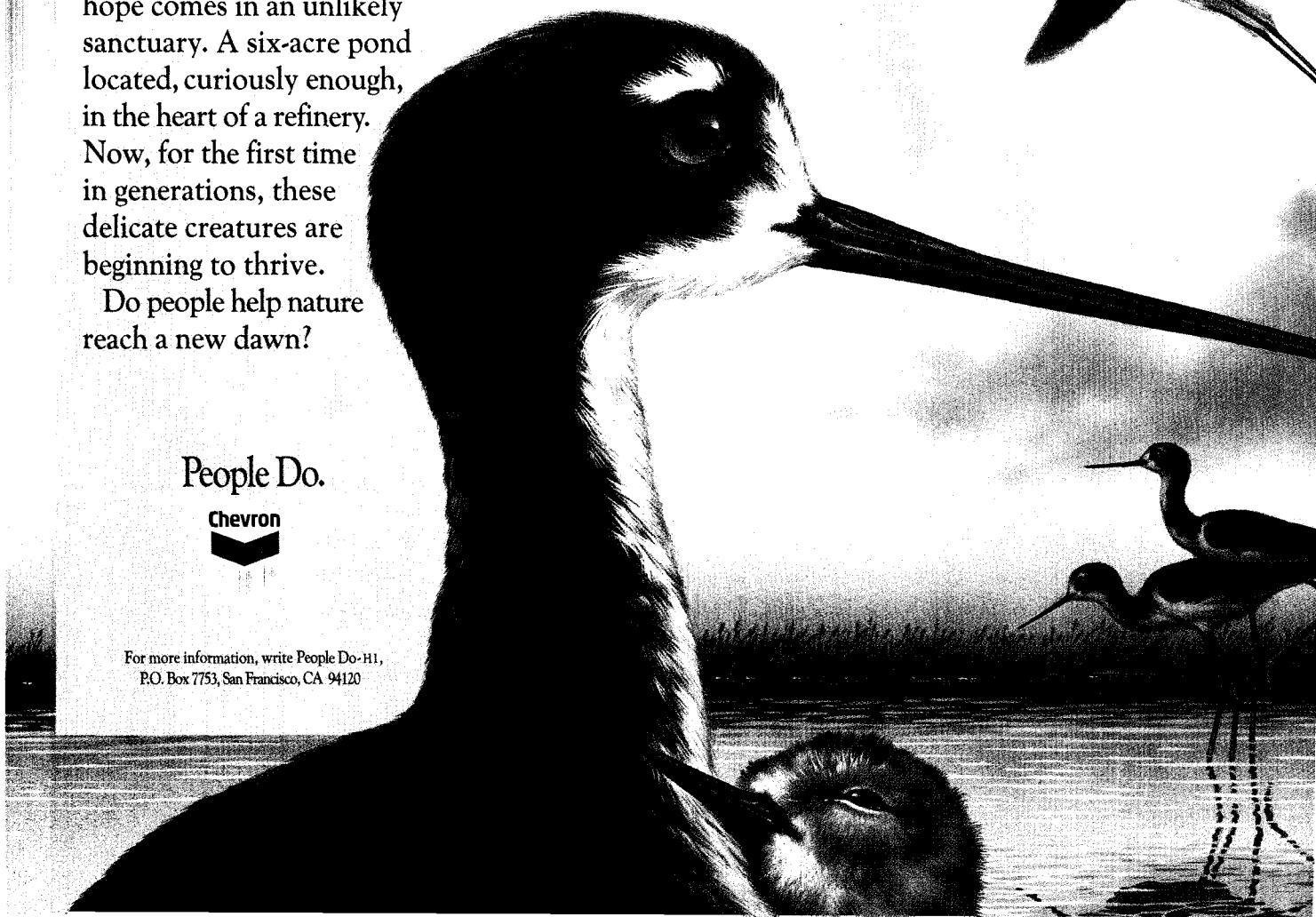
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Target

by LINDA GREGERSON

1.

What is, says the chorus, *this human*
desire—

do you know the part I'm

talking about? *What is this*

human

desire for children? Medea

has just left the stage

(*ab-scaena*,

said my friend, *ob-*

scene) to brood on her terrible work.

His ety-

mology is false, I've looked it up,

but my friend wasn't thinking

of children

in any case. What

says the mother, for all

her books,

who bathes the newborn child

in the sink, is sick

with fear

for the pulse in the scalp, the foot

still flexed as it was in the womb

and peeling

from the amnion. They have no death

in them yet, you see, their very excrement

is sweet,

they have no death but what's implied

in the porcelain rim, the drain

with its food scraps,

the outlet, the sponge, the thousand

mortal dangers in the kitchen drawer.

I'd sometimes feel,

with the child in my arms,

as I've felt looking down on the live

third rail.

What is this human desire

for children? They just make a bigger

target

for the anger of the gods.

2.

The thing she can't be rid of is that

no one

would believe her. Not the uniformed

policeman at the edge of town (and surely

he knew her?

the wildest boast of the census

could scarcely have amounted to

a decent

row of pews on Christmas Eve),

nor her own forbidding father nor
 good Emma
 at the kitchen sink. Months later

 at the jury trial,
 the word
 of a nine-year-old girl would suddenly

 count. Late morning
 on the third
 of May in 1929

 (the other crash was yet to come),
 no seam
 of comprehension in the ordered world,

 no help from the mild
 spring sky,
 my nine-year-old mother ran at last

 to the dead girl's house and de-
 livered
 her burden of blight directly. Arrow

 unwilling, whoever took pity
 on you?
 The rest replays in borrowed

 light: the courtroom in Chicago with its
 unswept floors,
 two girls with their handsful

 of violets. And one moving one way while the car
 bore down
 and one, my mother, the other.

 3.
 For those who think, as he did once,
 that in-
 advertent suffering is the worst of it here,

 in the range between hating thy neighbor
 and destruction
 on a global scale, the middle range,

where people live, the range
 from the hills,
 the journalist describes his con-

 versation with a captured Serb.
 The boy—
 the man?—was twenty-two.

I am happy, he said. He must
 have been asked
 what he hoped for or thought

 while he lay in the high half-light with his
 gun,
 a sniper in the frozen hills whose

 angle on the heart and hearth's acute.
 I am happy,
 he said, *to kill a child crossing*

the street with his mother.
 Now something
 has been altered in the transit

 from language to language; this isn't
 exactly
 the way we speak. Offstage,

 obscene, the god-from-a-machine
 at work.
 And circuitry whose other name

 is "happy": coincident
 access
 of never-on-this-good-green-earth

 and ground-from-which-we-start.
 I am happy
to kill a child crossing the street with his mother.

There is something so fantastic on the mother's face.

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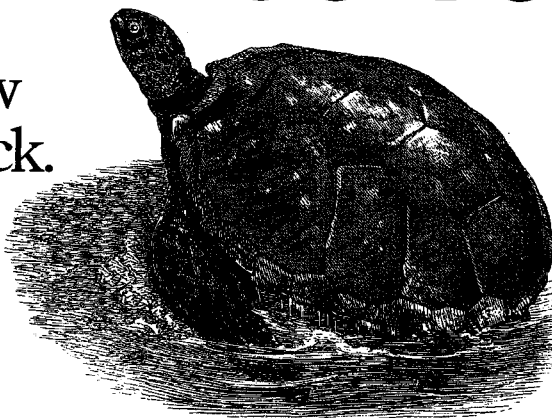
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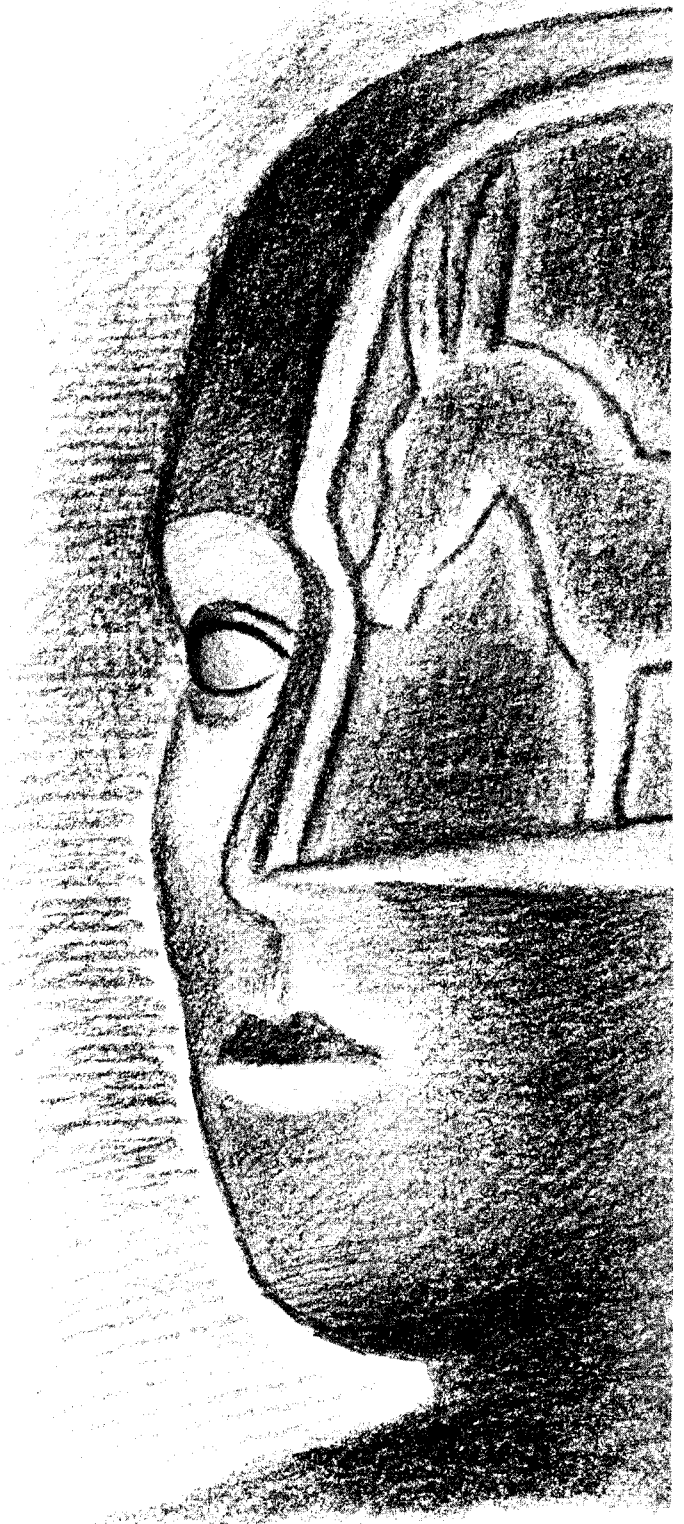
The Empty Symbolism of American Politics

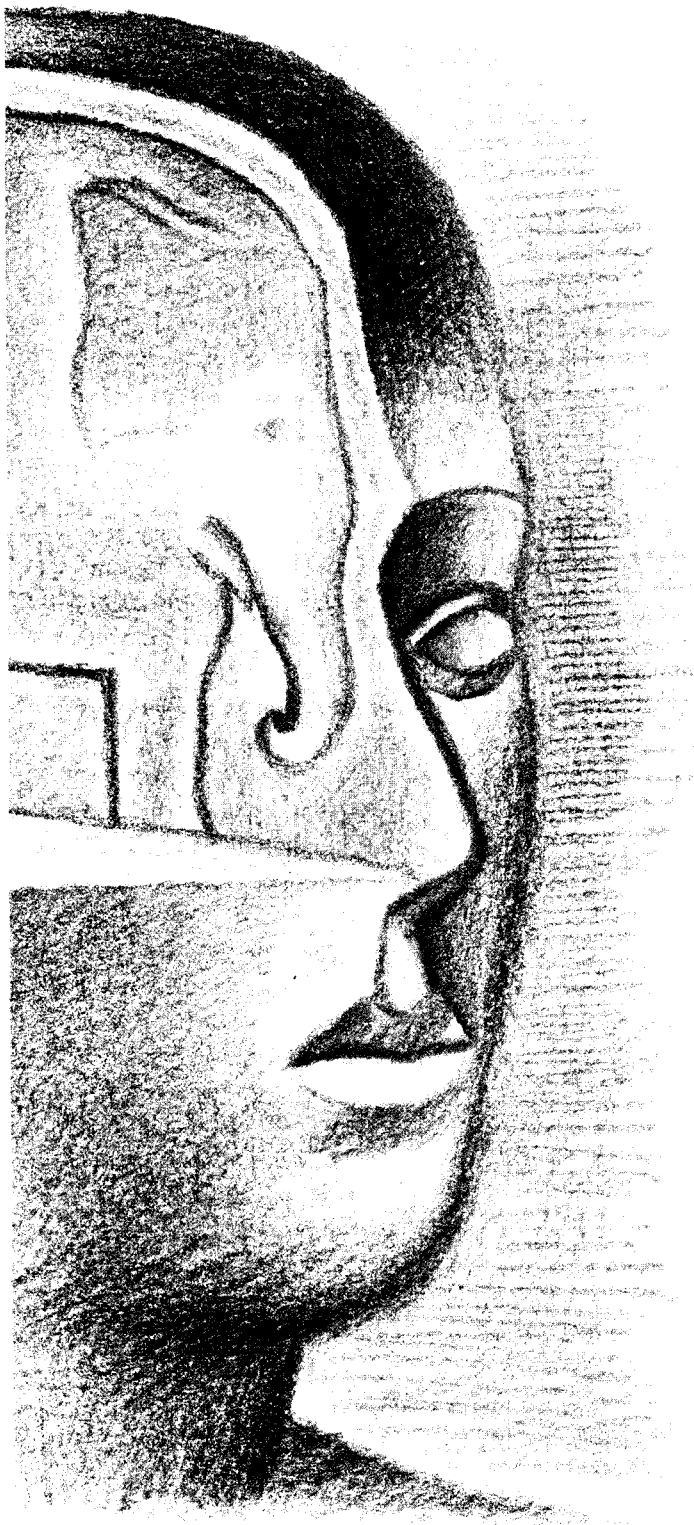
by ROBERT A. LEVINE

*Seeking a middle ground,
liberal and conservative
politicians alike
propose split-the-difference
“solutions” to our problems
which seem plausible and
pragmatic but do not,
of course, represent solutions
at all. What’s missing? The
dimension of reality*

IMAGINE a panel of eighteenth-century physicians with a royal patient who has a persistent fever and a hacking cough. Learned doctor Newt Gingrich wants to bleed three pints, learned doctor Richard Gephardt one. Doctors Bill Clinton and Bob Dole want to split the difference at a quart, but they can't decide which of them should make the incision. The next day the patient has acute pneumonia; the following day he dies and the kingdom goes into mourning.

That is what our political debate increasingly resembles. Led by the politics-is-a-game media, we have defined American politics along a single right-to-left dimension. We know that the new conservatives of the House of Representatives are on the right and the old liberals of the Kennedy-Johnson tradition on the left. And the votes are in the middle, so that's where President Clinton and ex-senator Dole have gone. The middle of the road may be mathematically





equidistant from the right and the left, but the symbolic middle toward which both candidates have moved is meaningless for making real national policy.

For liberals it is worse than meaningless. It is harmful, because most of the terms defining the political debate are inherently conservative: "less government," "middle-class tax cut," "tough on crime," "abolish welfare as we know it." And for most Americans, who just want solutions to the na-

tion's problems, the symbolic middle is useless, because it provides only symbolic solutions. We need real solutions. The correction of our national problems requires neither right nor left, neither moderation nor extremism. The political debate needs a new dimension: reality.

The issue that best represents the grip of symbolism on the public debate is balancing the budget. There is no difference for Clinton and Dole to split on this issue, because the Administration and the Republican Congress have agreed to balance the budget by 2002. A balanced budget has become the Holy Grail of public policy, a symbol that no politician dares to question. Meanwhile, in the real world of tradeoffs, where rarely do all good things go together, the effort to make that symbol an achieved fact is likely to slow the country's economic growth, increase unemployment, and even trigger a recession.

Other examples of the politics of symbolism can be found in categories from taxes to social programs—categories that are not far apart, since where the money comes from is inextricably linked to where it goes.

Taxes

THE Administration and the Republican Congress agree on the need for a middle-class tax cut. Why? Aside from the excellent politics of handing out money, the tax issue is based on four symbol-clotted myths plus one clear untruth that everyone knows as such and almost no politician mentions:

1. *Tax cuts, balanced by cuts in government expenditures, stimulate economic growth and employment.* Wrong. The supply-side theory is that if you let people keep more of their earnings, they will work harder. That is probably true, but most economists agree that it is a very limited truth—certainly as it applies to small shifts in current low marginal tax rates. Tax cuts do stimulate growth, but primarily on the demand side. People with more after-tax money in their pockets will spend more, and their buying will increase employment. But if the tax cuts are balanced by cuts in government expenditures, the people who were receiving money from the government will have less of it to spend, and that will decrease demand, offsetting the impetus that tax cuts have given demand and thus doing little to increase growth.
2. *The proposed tax cuts are for the middle class.* The middle class approaches motherhood as an American icon, but at least motherhood is definable. President Clinton has proposed cuts for couples with incomes up to \$120,000; the Republicans initially went much higher, although they have now come down. But the middle 50 percent of American families make \$15,000 to \$50,000 a year; only one family in six has an income above even \$75,000.
3. *Federal taxes are being used to equalize incomes.* The debate rages over whether they should or should not be. In

fact the redistributive effects of federal taxes are mild at best (or worst). Families with incomes of less than \$30,000 pay up to 13 percent of their income in taxes; those above that level do pay significantly more, going above 20 percent, but there is little variation among the groups making more than \$30,000.

The alleged leveling effect of taxes calls forth two further myths. The conservative one is that federal taxes are confiscatory, but at an average tax rate that is effectively less than 25 percent for families with incomes higher than \$200,000, confiscation is truly mythical. The liberal myth is that a more egalitarian distribution of income can be achieved primarily by playing with income-tax rates. Ronald Reagan's 1986 tax reform reduced progressivity, although loophole-tightening compensated for that to some degree. In focusing on income taxes, however, liberals ignore the really regressive feature of the tax system—Social Security payroll taxes, which are levied only on wages and salaries of less than \$62,000, thus exempting not only all pay above that level but also interest, dividends, and capital gains. A truly progressive tax system—that is, one that takes proportionally more from those with higher incomes—would look first at payroll taxes.

4. *Federal "entitlements" and other direct subsidy payments are questionable pieces of pork, whereas federal subsidies provided as tax reductions are rewards for virtue.* This is highly debatable. Entitlements are defined as payments available to all those who meet certain conditions—for example, poverty or willingness not to plant corn. The total cost is determined by the number of applicants and the amount paid to each. That definition of entitlements, however, fits not only direct payments but also most tax deductions—at least as defined by many economists and some tax lawyers. One example of the mythological difference between tax and expenditure subsidies lies in housing. The deductibility of mortgage interest is an entitlement that costs the federal government more than \$50 billion a year, and it goes mostly to middle-income homeowners along with better-off owners of expensive or multiple properties. Politically, the mortgage-interest deduction is viewed as almost pure virtue, to be continued even under many proposed "flat tax" plans. It costs twice as much as federal expenditures for public and other low-income housing—popularly considered a dubious subsidy, and one that is likely to be reduced significantly in the drive toward a balanced budget.

Many other expenditures will also be reduced in the name of budget balancing. Since the deficit is the total of expenditures minus the total of tax revenues, the other way to move toward budget balance would be to increase taxes. What is being proposed, however, by both the budget-balancing Congress and the President, is to cut taxes. The great untruth is that this is somehow consistent with movement toward

a balanced budget. It is not, and everybody knows it is not.

Political hypocrisy is hardly unprecedented, but it has seldom before provided the unquestioned basis for national political dialogue. The problem is not that homeownership and other tax entitlements are unjustified, or that tax cuts are a bad way to stimulate economic growth, or that the tax system should be used to redistribute income more efficiently. These are legitimate matters for debate. But they are not being debated. Instead the tax debate in this campaign focuses on which symbolic tax cuts should be given to the symbolic middle class in the symbolic drive to balance the symbolic budget.

Social Programs

THE discussion of "social programs"—federal programs intended to help people rather than, for example, the environment or the physical infrastructure—abounds with myths. At least three of them have to do with entitlements.

1. *All entitlements are social programs.* Incorrect. Many go to business, particularly if we include tax entitlements.

2. *Most entitlements go to the poor and minorities.* Not even close to true. Social Security, federal retirement, and Medicare, all of which go mostly to the middle class, account for 70 percent of total social entitlements. Aid that goes mostly to the poor, including "welfare," food stamps, and Medicaid, constitutes about 25 percent, of which less than one tenth—two percent of total social entitlements—has been for the notorious Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program.

3. *Social Security shouldn't be considered a social program because individuals pay for themselves with their contributions.* Never been true. Almost all recipients of Social Security pensions receive much more in benefits than they have ever put in. The difference is federal subsidy.

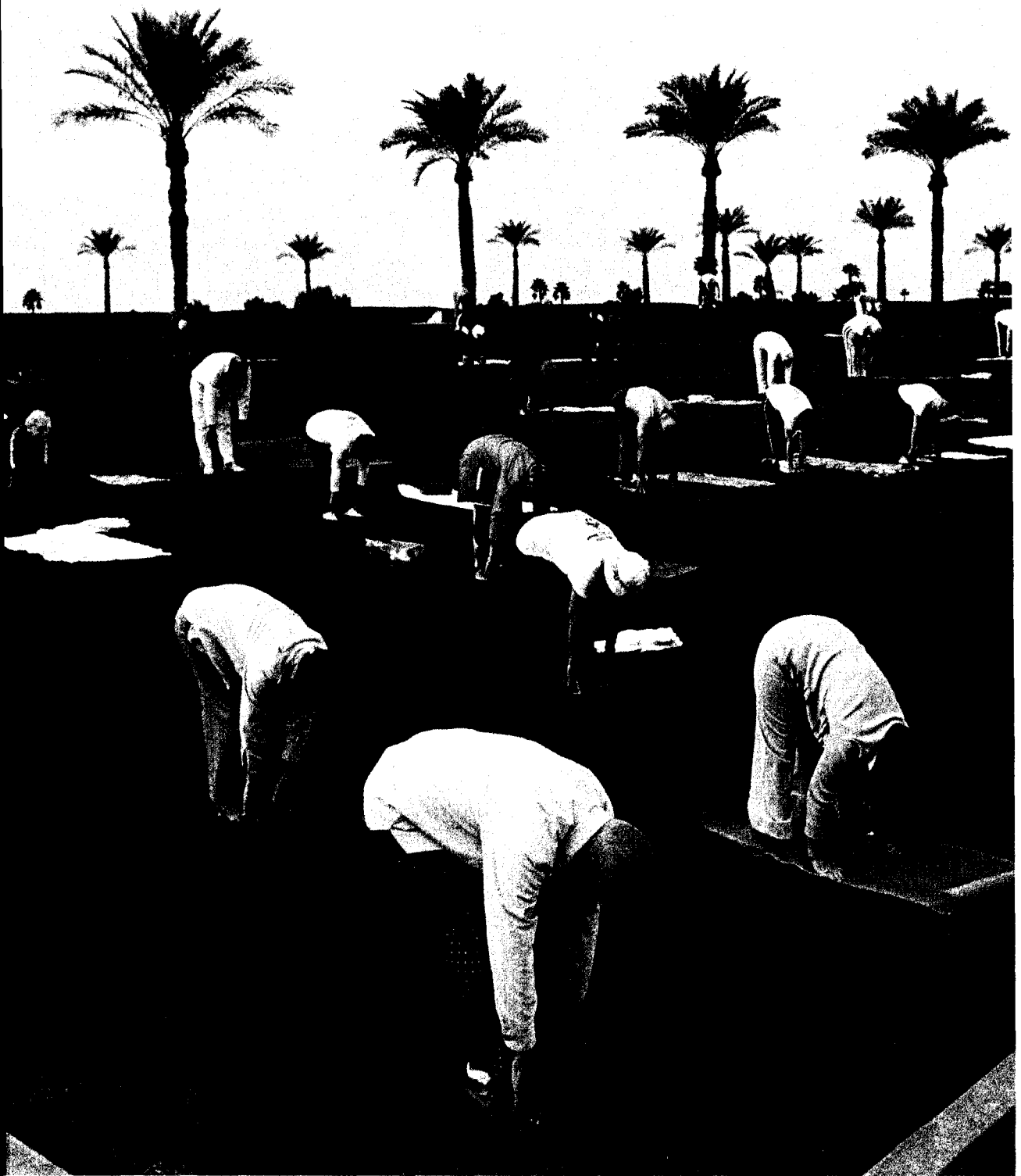
But it is the symbolic two percent for AFDC—"welfare mothers"—about which the political debate has long raged, with Clinton and the Republicans splitting differences and splitting hairs until Clinton finally accepted an essentially Republican bill, which will phase out AFDC, ending welfare as a federal entitlement. Since AFDC is at the core of what many experts as well as laypeople see as the "welfare syndrome"—the breakdown of the family among the dependent poor—its abolition may be necessary for long-term change, as both Clinton and the Republicans claim. But ending AFDC cannot by itself restore families or heal poor neighborhoods, and children's advocates on the liberal side are surely correct that ending AFDC will cause traumatic short-term suffering for their innocent victims—children in welfare families.

In any case, that is what the debate should be about, not the symbolic two percent of social-entitlement expenditures.

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Two Deep Myths

INDEED, the focus on cutting the two percent illustrates one of the two basic myths, one conservative, the other liberal, that distort the debate over federal social programs.

The conservative myth is that spending less is the way to achieve more. AFDC reform provides an example of why that is unlikely. The strong American consensus is that the objective of welfare reform is to move people off the AFDC rolls and into jobs—a reasonable and perhaps realistic goal for most recipients. Two central requirements for such movement are that there be jobs for welfare people to take and that there be child care for the AFDC mothers who are at the heart of the problem. But the economy has seldom made sufficient or sufficiently attractive jobs available at lower levels, particularly in recent years. Pushing welfare recipients off the assistance rolls and into employment will thus necessitate public funding of community jobs as a last resort for those who cannot find employment in the private sector. That will cost public money. So will child care.

Together, these two requisites mean that if welfare reform is to move recipients into jobs, it will take more, not less, money—at least for what may be a very long transitional period. That was recognized in the Family Support Act of 1988, sponsored by Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, which was never effective, largely because it was never funded as intended. It is also recognized in the experimental welfare reform of Republican Governor Tommy Thompson, of Wisconsin, embraced by both Clinton and Dole. The essence of the Wisconsin reform—public jobs when private ones are not available, and publicly funded child care—meets the objectives of liberal as well as conservative reformers. Neither Clinton nor Dole, though, has faced up to the fiscal implications of the Wisconsin experiment or of the Republican “reform” bill signed by the President: that federal budgets for the next five years should provide funding increases for welfare reform.

Nor is the spend-less-get-more mythology confined to welfare. In education, for example, conservatives contend that what is needed is structural reform, not “throwing money at the system.” Maybe so, but it is generally agreed that small classes work better than large ones, and small classes require more teachers and thus more money. Even more generally agreed is that good education requires good teachers, and as in every other line of economic endeavor, it takes good pay to attract good people (that is certainly what conservatives argue in the case of corporate executives). That, too, takes money.

If spend less, get more is the conservative myth, the liberal one is that we know what would work if we could only get the money to spend. Mostly we don’t know. Looking again at jobs, for people on welfare and others, conservatives along

with liberals generally accept the wisdom that the key is more training. Unfortunately, almost all the evidence points the other way. At least for welfare recipients and other people with limited skills, training has very little effect on long-term job prospects. Some exceptions exist, but they have proved very difficult to replicate on a large scale.

Similar doubts arise regarding many other social programs, even such a highly touted one as Head Start, for preschool children. Head Start does have immediate effects, but much of the evidence indicates that they fade as children go through the regular school system. The fault is almost certainly with the schools rather than with Head Start, but that criticism carries the dismal implication that everything must work for anything to work.

In fact some programs do work on a stand-alone basis. The food-stamp program, in spite of occasional abuses, has prevented widespread hunger among poor Americans, and its companion school-lunch program has supported child nutrition rather well. In these cases the facts have overcome some negative mythology; fraud certainly exists, for example, but it is hardly rampant. A related program, for nutrition of women, infants, and children (WIC), has never done as well politically, even though it is widely recognized that good pre-natal and postnatal nutrition is crucial to the proper mental and physical development of children.

We should do what we know how to do, but that’s limited. One crucial example is that we have no real idea how to keep children in problem families from becoming problem parents starting new problem families. One logical answer would be to remove children at risk from such families at an early age. Newt Gingrich’s orphanage scheme was too pat an idea and too easy to caricature, but the issue he raised deserved discussion rather than the dismissal it received as an unacceptable symbol. If the prize of capturing the right symbol—the sainted “middle class”—is often political victory, the price of using the wrong one is as often defeat. Thus is public policy made hostage to public relations.

Abrogation of the opposing myths of spend less, get more and spend on everything could make it possible to spend sufficient money on programs that work while using experimentation and evaluation to invent and search for more. Instead the Republican Congress has been hell-bent on spending less for almost everything (except defense), while the response of the Clinton Administration has been to fight hard for symbolic expenditures for a few more children here, a few more policemen there, and a few volunteers spread around everywhere.

Symbolism has always been a necessary part of political life. But most past symbolic stances, from preserving the Union to defeating the Evil Empire, have been connected with reality. Whether it is the influence of the media or something deeper, the connection is becoming tenuous. So is the ability of the nation to solve its real problems. ☸

From Willow Temple

by DONALD HALL

WE lived on a farm outside Abigail, Michigan, when I was a girl in the 1930s. My father was a Latin teacher, which was how I came to be called Camilla. I cannot say that I have lived up to the name of Virgil's warrior. My father served as the principal of Abigail High School, and we kept chickens and horses on our flat and scrubby land near the Ohio line. My father's schoolwork kept him busy, so we employed a succession of hired hands for chores around the farm. Many were drunks. A weekly rite, when I was small, was for my father to pay a fine on Monday morning—6:00 A.M., before school—and drive the befuddled, thirsty, shamefaced hired man back home. When the advances for fines grew monstrous, so that our man was indentured a month ahead, he hopped a freight west. In hard times the quality of help increased, even as my father's salary and the price of eggs went down; he hired strong young men for three dollars a week, some of them sober. The poverty of those years touched everyone, including a protected child. I remember tramps coming to the back door; I remember men with gray faces whom my mother succored with milk and buttered bread. I can see one of them now, preserved among the rest because he addressed me rather than my mother. "It's hard, little girl. Could you spare a crust, little girl?"

The house was my mother's house. She was Ella, the bright face of our family, beautiful and lively—a lover of horses, poetry, and jokes. People said, lightly, that she married my father to hold herself down. I grew up loving my quiet father with a love that was equally quiet; I desperately

loved my serene, passionate mother. What a beauty she was. When I see reproduced a *Saturday Evening Post* cover from the 1930s, I see my mother's face: regular features, not large but strong; bold cheekbones with good coloring; dark short hair; fullish lips, deeply red without lipstick; large blue eyes, staring outward with a look both shy and erotic. When my mother walked into a group of strangers, the room hushed.

She had grown up with four sisters, isolated on a backcountry farm in Washtenaw County. The Great War was only a distant rumor. Her childhood was a clutch of girls, a female conspiracy on a remote, patchy forty acres, in a domain of one-room schools where half the pupils belonged to her own family. They made one another clothespin dolls for Christmas; they sewed and did fancywork in competition for their stepmother's praise; they passed their dreams and their dresses on to one another. How I wanted a little sister to pass my dresses and dolls on to! When my mother told me stories from her childhood, I heard themes repeated: the family was self-suf-

During the day my parents tried to carry on as they always had. I was impressed by the aplomb with which they behaved, "for the child's sake." Their ability to deceive, to be utterly different by day and by night, carved itself into my soul

ficient (I grew up reading and rereading *The Swiss Family Robinson*) and “got by on little.” When she spoke of their genuine simplicity, she spoke with wonder, not with bitterness; she didn’t make me feel guilty over my relative comfort. The Hulze farm never prospered as the Battells’—my father’s family’s—did for decades. The land was poor, but to survive by your own labor on your own land was triumph enough. Another theme was death, for she had lost a baby sister to a fever at eighteen months; and her mother, Patience, died of diabetes, not long before insulin was discovered, when my mother was nine. Two years later she acquired a stepmother, my grandmother Huldah, who was kindly but fierce, with a Christianity modeled on that of Massachusetts Bay in the seventeenth century. Like my father, my mother was an eldest child; she mothered her younger sisters even after Huldah’s access, since Huldah quickly bore Herman Hulze two more daughters.

Life on the Hulze farm was hard—Monday washing, Tuesday ironing, Wednesday baking—but as my mother remembered it for me, it mustered grave satisfactions. Everyone worked equally, according to age and ability; everyone was clothed, warm, and well fed; in a venture of equal labor no one was dependent on another’s largesse. Weekdays were half school, half work; the children, who rose at five, *after* their parents, did housework before school and darning or fancywork before bed. Saturday’s chores finished the week, and the family looked forward to a workless Sunday. Yet Huldah’s Sabbath was strenuous. Her church was two hours of hellfire in the morning, with Christian Endeavor (hymns, visiting speakers) at night. Sometimes Huldah searched out a Sunday-afternoon church meeting, to occupy her family for an otherwise idle moment.

AN exception to my mother’s largely female nation was a dear male cousin whose story she told me as I grew older. Rudolph Howells was her first cousin, two years older, her father’s sister’s boy, who lived three miles down the road. Even at ages when boys and girls avoid each other, Rudy and Ella played together. They hiked to each other’s houses, or barebacked a workhorse on a rare workless weekday; or they met under a great willow beside a creek halfway between them. Its shelter was their hideout, and they came to call it Willow Temple. In the absence of telephones they exchanged penny postcards to arrange their meetings. For my mother, isolated among sisters in that flat countryside, the boy’s friendship was redemptive; Rudolph was the male of my mother’s early life—after her father, who was alternately working and asleep. For Rudy, who was an only child, my mother provided the sole companionship close to his age. As she described him, Rudy sounded unnaturally solemn; it was Ella’s childhood joy to bring out the child in Rudolph, to set him giggling or dreaming. Rudy was a reader. He brought books to my mother, who became a reader

herself in order to please him. In Willow Temple they recited for each other the poems they had memorized at school and performed for Prize Speaking—works by Whittier, Longfellow, Joaquin Miller, Edgar Allan Poe, James Whitcomb Riley. My mother could say “Telling the Bees” right through, without a mistake, when she was eighty.

Rudolph was a “scholar,” as Michigan country people called a serious student. In 1900 few from the farmland went to college. After the Great War people began to think about college, and to assume that Rudolph would attend the University of Michigan. As my mother late in her life told stories about Rudolph, I understood that for all his studiousness he felt some diffidence about his capacities. He worried that he would not do well at college. My mother not only made him laugh but encouraged him to leave the countryside and enroll in Ann Arbor’s domestic Athens. He would *excel*, she told him. Then, doubtless, he would become a minister. What else did one go to college for? Doctor, lawyer, teacher, pastor. Rudy in his solemnity found a way to combine the romance of his reading—the South Seas, piracy, jungles of Africa—with his dark Christianity. Some speakers at Christian Endeavor were missionaries returned from outlandish places, where they had won souls to Christ, ministering to the pig-tailed hordes of China and the naked savages of the Congo. Now they traveled the Protestant Midwest to raise money for hospitals that would treat leprosy and pellagra.

When he was fourteen, Rudy left his one-room school to attend an academy in the mill town of Trieste, eleven miles away. He endured his semi-exile—boarding weekdays and coming home for weekends—until he was sixteen. For two years my mother saw him at church every Sunday morning, and rarely at other moments except in summer. They wrote each other a midweek postcard. They remained so close that people teased them about being sweethearts, even about marrying—first cousins or not. My mother assured me that it would never have happened: they were too much brother and sister. One Sunday in the May when my mother turned fifteen, the church members packed picnics and lunched together in a field beside Goosewater Creek, not far from Willow Temple. Ella remembered Rudy at the picnic playing with a new baby, another cousin, by trundling her carriage fast and slow, making the baby Agnes jerk and laugh with abrupt stops and accelerations. After eating deviled eggs and pork sandwiches and rhubarb pie, Ella and Rudy took a long walk together, talking about their futures, continually brushing away mosquitoes. They tramped happily among the weed trees that grew along the creek, my mother remembered, and sat inside the green dome of Willow Temple. They spoke of the university and Ella’s high school, where she took Latin because Rudy had recommended it. Ella told him jokes she had saved for him. Mostly they began, “A minister, a priest, and a Christian Science practi-

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tioner . . .” One story made him laugh until he wept; she could never remember which one. When she was terribly old, and dying, Ella still recalled the small yellow butterflies that had been abundant in the fields like migrant buttercups; she remembered the blue dress she wore, embroidered with red tulips.

That night, when Rudolph’s ride came to take him back to Trieste, no one could find him. He was not in his room; he did not respond to his mother’s “Yoo-hoo!” After half an hour his ride went off without him. His father and the hired man took lanterns from the barn and searched for him in the darkness among the outbuildings. Then they climbed the small pasture hill. I remember seeing that hill when I was a child. In my mind I can watch the yellow lanterns rise in the black evening, and hear the men’s voices calling for him: “Rudolph! Ru-dee!” His parents were frightened; maybe Rudy had fallen taking a walk after five o’clock supper; maybe he had hit his head on a rock and lay somewhere unconscious. They summoned neighbor cousins to help.

Three miles away, asleep in bed, my mother knew nothing.

After an hour searching outside the house the men came back, thinking to look in the root cellar. It was Agnes’s

young father, cousin Michael, who found Rudolph where he had hanged himself in the attic. As Michael walked up the steep stairs with his lantern low, his face brushed against the boots. The impact pushed the boots away, and they swung back to hit him.

As long as any of his contemporaries lived, Rudolph’s suicide was the subject of speculation. Rudolph—everyone repeated—was a sensible and lovable boy, affectionate if a little serious, “old for his age” but capable of playfulness. He loved his mother and father and his cousin Ella; he was a *happy* child. Ella’s family reconstructed, by gradual accumulation of detail, the days and weeks before the tragedy occurred. No one could find anything that hinted of despair or violence. Why did a bright, cheerful, beloved seventeen-year-old boy hang himself in his attic? *Why? Why? Why?* Could it have been an accident? How could he

tie a noose and slip it over his head by accident? People said, *It must have been something he read in a book.* They decided at the end of every discussion that reading stories caused Rudolph’s death.

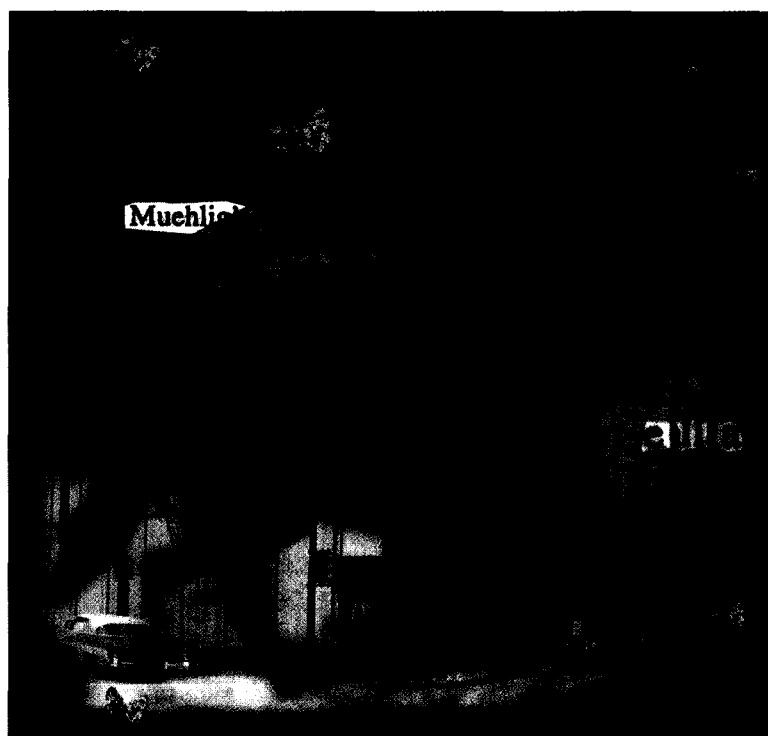
THAT Sunday night began the infection that throbbed and festered at the center of my mother’s life. Although she was warmhearted, charming, and funny, although most of her life she appeared serene or even content, I believe that a fever always burned inside her. What happened was so savage, and so inexplicable, that it never let her go. Over fifty and sixty and seventy years her incredulity remained intact. She wept when she told me this story, or made reference to it. “Oh, Camilla,” she said, “why did it happen?” In my sexually obsessed youth

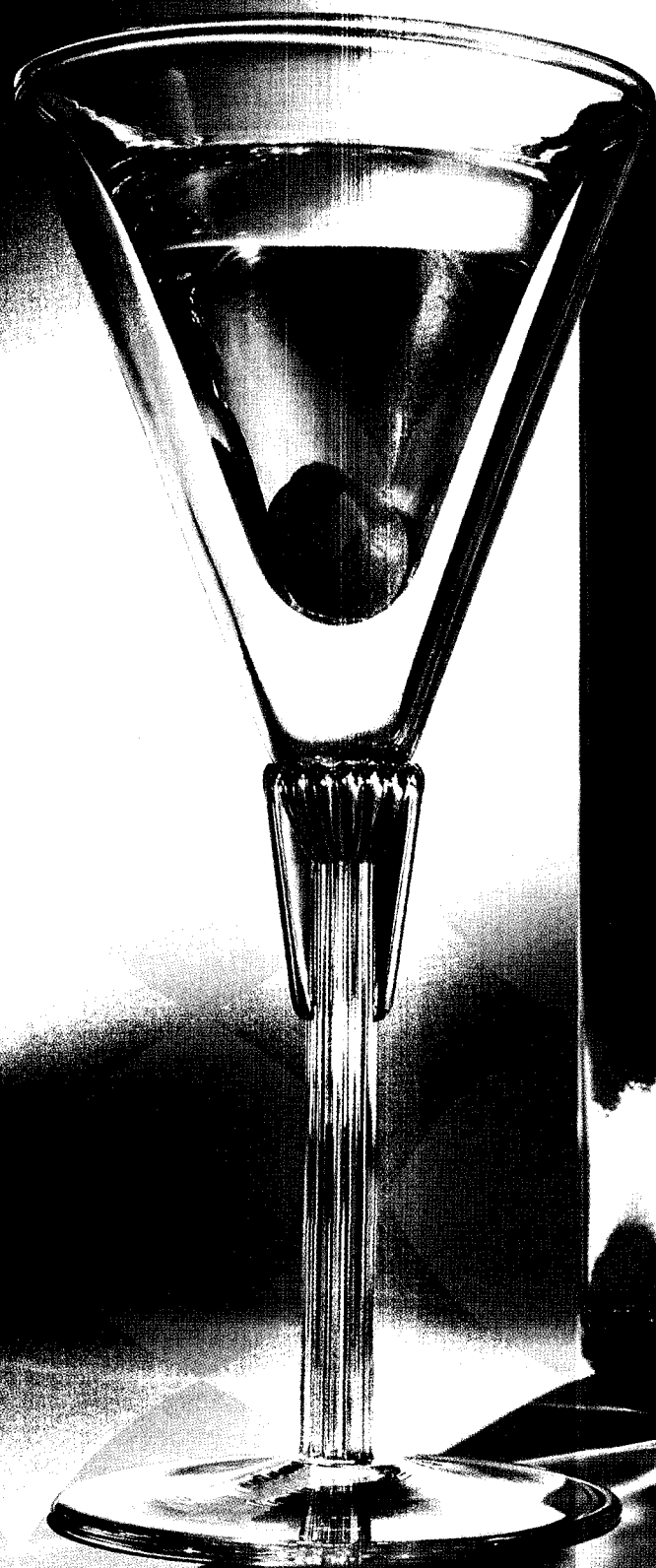
I tried out the notion that something had occurred or almost occurred inside Willow Temple. But my mother’s continual, enormous astonishment—and her absence of guilt—convinced me that nothing untoward, or even unusual, had happened in Willow Temple on that Sunday afternoon. For Rudolph and Ella the erotic life concealed itself under hymns and petticoats.

Part of the story was how my mother first heard the news.

Monday morning, ignorant of what had happened (ten years would pass before the Hulzes had a telephone), my mother took the seven o’clock train for Bosworth and its high school. Every school day of the year she and her sister Betty took the milk train. When they sat down and the locomotive jerked forward, behind them were two men who had boarded three miles north, at the depot near Rudolph’s house. My mother heard Mr. Peabody say to Mr. Gross what a terrible thing it was when his own father, just last night, had had to cut Rudolph Howells down from a beam in the attic. Why would a fine boy like Rudy go and kill himself?

My fifteen-year-old mother alighted at the first stop, took the next train back, and went to bed. (Betty went on to school. It was part of the story, always, that Betty continued to school.) Ella vomited and for three days would not eat. She stayed home the rest of the school year, four weeks. She





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turned pale and lost weight; Dr. Fowles said that she was anemic. Once a week a Trieste butcher sent two quarts of steer's blood for Huldah to store in the ice box. My mother drank a tumbler of blood every day; it nauseated her, but mostly she kept it down. Once, she left her bed and slipped from the house for half a day—terrifying her father and Huldah—to walk by the creek until she came to Willow Temple, where she crept inside and howled hysterical tears. ("I thought he would be there," she told me when she was old. "*Camilla*, I thought he was *there*.") Thereafter her family contrived to keep her in bed. She failed all summer, eating little, until one evening she heard Huldah's harsh voice in the garden beyond her window telling a visitor, "We're going to lose our big girl."

This overhearing or eavesdropping appeared to startle my mother back to life. By the time school opened in September, she had become bright and energetic again—brighter and more energetic than before. After her mourning she turned from a shy fifteen-year-old into the creature who caused the intake of breath. As her beauty became obvious for the first time, her youthful life began. She took part in high school literary and theatrical groups, as much as commuting allowed. A year later, in her senior year, she boarded in Bosworth weekdays. If a hayride or a square dance occurred on a Saturday night, she stayed over in town for the weekend, despite Huldah's disapproval. The summer after graduation, when she was seventeen, she took a job at Muehlig's department store in Ann Arbor, boarding with a family related to her mother.

It was clear, when my mother recollected, that Ann Arbor raised a pleasant devil in her. When another boarder arranged a blind date for her with a university student, she entered into a new life, and its excitement still reverberated when she was eighty and remembered those years. She became *popular*, a powerful word in the vocabulary of the time, and dated many young men. One fraternity (my father never belonged to one; to join would have been unthinkable) elected Ella Hulze its sweetheart, granting her an honor normally reserved for a sorority girl. She would have joined a sorority if she had been a student. (When I attended the university, I joined one and quit after a year.) My mother dated someone every night of the week, she told me, and her engagement book was full a month ahead. She made me laugh with her stories of boys she dated—a collateral Ford who drove a Stutz, a broker-to-be who waxed his red moustache into points, a fainting swain who sent long-stemmed roses to Muehlig's. "It was innocent," she told me when I was seventeen. Ten years later I reminded her of that word, when she stayed with me after my daughter's birth. She laughed. "It was *mostly* innocent, Camilla." She told me about driving to Chicago for a weekend in a roadster with two fraternity boys. They visited a speakeasy; having taken a room at the YWCA, she had to ring a bell to be let in at 3:00 A.M.,

and covered her mouth to disguise her breath. She returned to Ann Arbor on Monday at 7:00 A.M., to drink coffee and attend her counter at Muehlig's. A week later both boys died at dawn in the same roadster, careering off the road into a maple tree near Walled Lake after a night of Prohibition gin and jazz. When she met my father, as he shopped for Christmas presents for his family, my mother was ready to settle down. They were engaged by Easter. My mother was eighteen then, my father twenty-six.

She clerked in a department store; he was a graduate student in classical languages. People speak of the attraction of opposites. Opposites are attracted when each is anxious about its own character. (And I am their product, in old age still a woman anxious about the conflicts in her character.) I think of my father as he must have appeared in 1925. He came from country people, as she did, but he wore eyeglasses and lived for books—particularly books in ancient languages. My mother had taken Latin for two years of high school, but she stopped after Rudy died. How did my father find the courage to approach the beautiful Ella Hulze? I suppose his innocence was his courage; eight years older, bound to his library carrel, he would not have known that she was *popular*. Billy, or William, had reached the moment in his life, halfway through his last year of study, with a high school teaching job waiting for him, when he was ready for courtship and marriage. Through a legacy from his godmother, who had married into Flint's auto industry, he had \$1,500, which would provide the down payment on a house with a mortgage at two and a half percent. Possibly his studies contributed to his infatuation: I laughed when I learned, not long before he died, that his final seminar at Michigan had examined Ovid's *Art of Love*. Like Ella, my father jolted himself into looking for an opposite. Then he met a beautiful girl, from a Michigan farm, selling scarves at Muehlig's.

MAYBE William was not quite so opposite as he appeared to be. After all, he grew up outside Abigail on a hog farm—prosperous for many decades—that his parents and his bachelor brother worked until foreclosure in 1937. Billy became the Latinist—"William Hammersmith Battell," as his diplomas read, and "foremost scholar in the history of Abigail High," the *Abigail Journal* called him—who majored in classics at the University of Michigan. He was the first in his family to finish high school, and, of course, college. After he made Phi Beta Kappa, in 1922, he returned to raise pigs with his father and his brother. He did this on principle, full of Roman republican notions; he enjoyed tales of Colonial American blacksmiths who read forty lines of Hebrew before dawn. A pig farmer who translated Latin poetry seemed no anomaly to my father.

But my father was not a skillful farmer. When pig raising did not take his full attention, he felt inadequate or hypocrit-



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ical; in his absentmindedness he failed his agrarian ideals. The Latin language, and only the Latin language, enthralled him. Exhausted after a day among hogs, he sat by the oil lamp placed on a central table in the small living room, reading Tacitus while his mother darned and his brother studied baseball scores and his father drifted into sleep. In Virgil's *Georgics* the Michigan farm crossed paths with the study of Latin. As a young man my father dreamed of translating the *Georgics*, adapting them to southern Michigan, but the farming tired him out; he never completed the first book.

By 1925 the family realized that the Battell farm could not support four adults. The agricultural depression had started a decade before the rest of the country crashed, and the once-rich farm began to fail. Somebody had to leave the place and get a job.

Then came the disaster, as my father always called it. One of his chores was to feed the piglets once they were weaned from their great mothers, carrying buckets of corn from the Battell cribs. The stored feed nourished a guerrilla army of rats. One morning my young father, weary after staying up with Virgil half the night, fed rat poison to sixty-seven young pigs. The whole family wept, even his hard father and stolid brother, as they dug a long

trench on a rainy day and buried their hopes for a prosperous or even a tolerable year. When he was an old man, he still shook his head in melancholy guilt as he spoke of his lethal error. "The bags were different colors and sizes. The pellets were gray. How could I have done it?" I remember him at seventy-four, still lamenting his terrible mistake; he could see the pale young bodies in the rain, and puddles gathering in the trench. My mother, the family wit and teaser, knew better than to joke about the disaster. But once, when my father was soaring high in self-confident absentmindedness, and made tea by pouring hot coffee over tea leaves, she called him "The Great Poisoner." He laughed, I remember, but looked abashed and sorrowful.

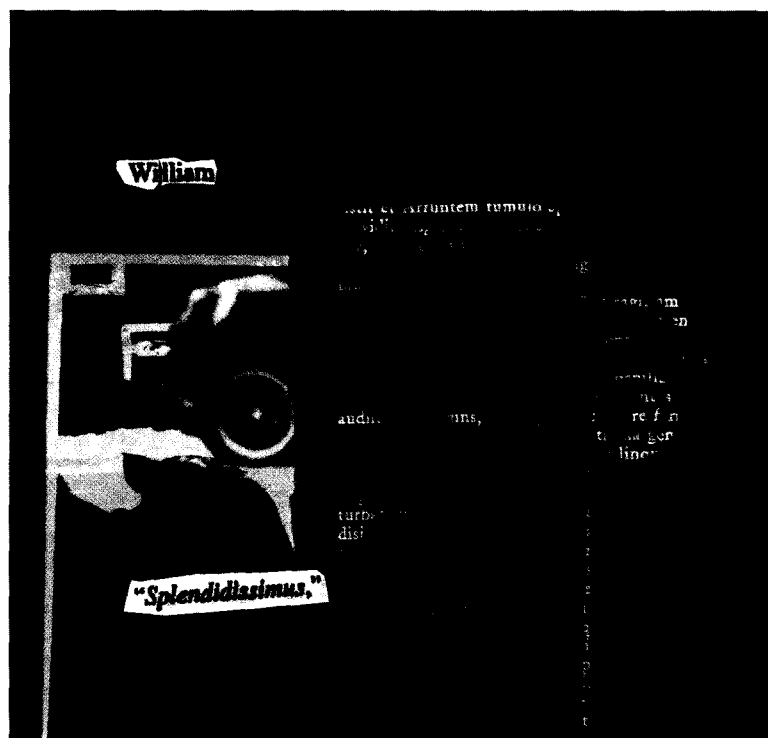
After the disaster the Battell family took out a mortgage to provide capital for my father's M.A. at the university. Back in Ann Arbor, my father undertook courses in educa-

tion as well as Greek and Latin, so that he might become a high school teacher. Two months after he returned to his studies, he met my mother in Muehlig's. The elderly Miss Wuestefeld, of Abigail High, who had taught Billy, had told him that she would hold on until William was finished with graduate school. Thus my father revisited, ten years afterward, the classroom where he had learned to chant *amo, amas, amat*, eagerly leading new students to recite *amo, amas, amat*. It was a secure position, as everyone knew: "There'll always be work for a Latin teacher." A monthly check would repay his family's bank loan and help to repair his conscience, mourning after the poisoned piglets. In Abigail his old schoolmates would breed him pupils and call him "professor" without irony. My parents had been married

three years, and I was a baby, when the position of principal opened. My father was chosen not because of his administrative ability but because of his sex. Most teachers were women, but principals were men; only men could deal with unruly boys. Maybe my mother was unruly too.

My early life was happy—or at least it was *even*, like a plain as it steadily upthrust a crop of corn. The radio and the automobile were our wonders, and I

measure my childhood by the names of products: the Crosley, the Emerson, the Philco; the Model T, the brief blue Chevrolet, the Model A, which never broke down as we took rides every warm-weather Sunday afternoon, adventurously speeding at forty miles an hour over Michigan backcountry roads, knowing where we were headed without being sure how we would get there. My parents sat together in the front seat and I sat in the back, scooting from side to side in my Sunday dress as the landscape drew me. Having clear access to both sides was a luxury of only-child-hood. On these Sunday drives my parents spoke little. I watched my father's mild, bespectacled eyes take in an Angus herd; I gazed at my mother's poised, beautiful profile as her face turned from side to side, calm or complacent, accepting what the route offered. Every Sunday we rode two or three hours over southern Michigan and northern Ohio, looking at cattle,



chickens, turkeys, pigs, and horses. When we had driven as far as we would go, and started back, my father would search out an ice-cream parlor and treat us to a sundae.

Always we returned in order to ride our horses for an hour before Sunday-night supper, which was sandwiches around the radio. I cannot remember when the Jack Benny show began broadcasting, but in my old age Jack Benny's running gags, remembered, taste of cream cheese and crushed pineapple. My mother and I rode together after school in good weather. On Saturdays as well as Sundays all three of us saddled up: my father's horse, the roan stallion, Bigboy, unruly like a high school boy; my mother's Morgan mare, Benita; and my multicolor pony, Skylark, who was large enough to carry my slight figure until I was sixteen. These handsome creatures were the enduring quotidian romance of my girlhood. After school I curried Skylark's flanks until my mother was ready for our amble along a stony road at the side of a hayfield. Both my parents grew up with workhorses, and would have missed equine company were it not for these three, stabled in the barn adjacent to our chickens. I'm not sure why we kept chickens, except that my father considered farming a *good thing*—and he no longer cared to raise pigs. Selling eggs and broilers paid for the hired men and the horses.

When my mother sat on a horse, she looked not like a Michigan farmgirl but like the Honorable Lady Something; she wore a horse the way a model wears clothes. My father was unpredictably impetuous, an excellent rider on a capricious, powerful horse. Bigboy liked to run, and would have run away if my father had not been so masterful; they galloped ahead of us and galloped back, pulling up in a froth of high spirits. One of my mother's teasing names for my father was Billy Cowboy.

IN my earliest recollections my parents acted like lovers, if not quite like a pastoral shepherd and his shepherdess. They were polite, in the old-fashioned way, but they took every opportunity to touch each other. When they didn't want me to understand something, they talked in Latin, or something Latinish enough to confuse me. My father delighted, in his mild, fussy way, in their domestic classicism. *Equus* was an early word, not to mention *amor*. Before I was seven, I knew that *via* meant both "road" and that we would take a ride in the Model A. Horses were every day and the Model A was Sundays. I cherished those afternoons in the back seat. I cherish them still, as I approach my seventies. In my life, when I have been especially troubled—my daughter died in childhood; I divorced my husband—I have found myself for comfort playing back mental films of those afternoons in the back seat of a Ford, exploring the flat country roads.

Driving the car, my father, I imagine, daydreamed Latin. I have no notion what my mother dreamed. Maybe she thought of my father, or of Rudolph. Because Rudolph was the source of my mother's Latin, and because he and my fa-

ther were both serious, even solemn, I came to think of Rudolph as an antecedent to my father. I considered that my mother made up for losing Rudolph when she married William. I was too shy to advance this theory to her until she was well into her eighties. "Perhaps," she said, but my notion clearly annoyed her. "They did not look alike at all," she said, and a moment later she wiped her eyes.

My mother learned to drive—a fairly advanced idea for a small-town housewife in 1933—in order to go to the library, so that she and I could stock up on books. I progressed from dog-and-cat books to a wonderful poetry anthology called *Silver Pennies*. Next I found novels, from *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* to *Black Beauty*, with excursions into the Nancy Drew series, and started to inhabit the house of stories, in love with the improbable and the heroic. My mother enjoyed novels and biographies but cared more for poetry. She deserted Whittier for Wordsworth, and Longfellow for Keats, but she also admired the moderns: Sara Teasdale, Edna St. Vincent Millay, John Masefield, Elinor Wylie, Edwin Arlington Robinson. She wore out a copy of *Tristram*. Later she found Robert Frost—my father admired Frost, the classical side—and the young Stephen Vincent Benét. It would have been too much for her to admire T. S. Eliot or Wallace Stevens; later, when I tried them on her (I was at college), she shook her head regretfully.

My father reread Virgil, Horace, and Catullus; he preferred Cicero's letters to his orations; he worked away at Thucydides, read journals of classical studies—and increasingly took part in a battle over the place of classical studies in the American high school curriculum. Voices in the 1930s proclaimed that learning Latin was impractical, that our youth, rather than waste valuable time on dead languages, should concentrate on arithmetic, mechanical drawing, and business letters. To my father, the suggestion was retrograde. In Abigail he tried to institute at least one year of Latin for all students, with four years for those few students aiming toward college. Two years of Latin were required for admission to the University of Michigan.

He gave speeches after lunch at the Rotary Club; he wrote letters to the *Abigail Journal*. Although principal, he still taught Latin, and because he taught with enthusiasm, Abigail's Latin courses were well subscribed. Elsewhere the walls were falling. When an old Detroit high school chose to remove "Classical Academy" from its name, he wrote a letter to *The Detroit News*, ending, "If our civilization is to survive encroaching darkness, Latin and Greek must keep alight the fires of learning, shining beacons that keep us to the path." He signed it "William Hammersmith Battell, Principal, Abigail High School." If I let him sound pompous, remember that he pursued a passion.

With his duties as chairman of the Michigan Classical Association, and as secretary of the Great Lakes Latin Society, he paid less attention to our farm, haphazardly preserved by

the succession of hired men. The first I remember is Herbert Ganke, an old man who talked to himself while he worked. He was courtly to me and my mother, and worked slowly but steadily. Once a month he got into trouble. Finally he passed out in a back yard after stealing clothes from the family's clothesline. Later we hired boys who worked a week or two and vanished; a sweet hobo named Tom lasted a whole winter, sleeping under the eaves in the hired man's room. He disappeared after one payday, around the time the snowdrops poked up. A shy, handsome local boy named Raymond was marvelous with horses, and could even control the volatile Bigboy. Raymond was illiterate, my mother discovered, and she taught him to read.

Late afternoons, when my father came home from school, and my mother and I were back from our ride, he changed

into overalls, consulted with the latest hand, and checked out the hens while my mother cooked supper. I attended the one-room school a quarter of a mile away, and sometimes brought a friend, Caroline or Rebecca, back to play; but on rainy days, or when I played alone with my dollhouse or read stories, I interrupted myself to visit the barn and the outbuildings with Herbert or Raymond or Miller, to curry Skylark and feed apples to Skylark, Benita, and (carefully) Bigboy. Some hands were grumpy, possibly not fond of small girls, as I followed them around; others took the opportunity to smoke cigarettes and tell the stories of their lives. With Raymond, I was in love; after school I liked it when Raymond sat at the kitchen table doing his ABCs under my mother's supervision, reading my dog-and-cat books, moving on to *Silver Pennies*.

INDIA COTTON SHIRT

She saw it in a secondhand shop,
another woman's shirt given away
in a fury of forgetting
or refusing the imperfect fit,
and she wanted it
because of the man she imagined
taking it off of her.

They would argue a little,
one of a good love's
better arguments:
who gets to perform the small favor
that will bring both of them pleasure?
This time, he'd win;
she could already see
his flickering hands.

White embroidered on white,
the threads pulled through by a needle
so fine it left no tracks.
A geometric design,
none of the limitations
of resemblance.

Every white blouse
is an expression of faith,
the immaculate clothing in which

one may regard oneself
with a little arrogance,
a little vanity.
One has finally got old enough
to see through one's own flaws.

She knew what was wrong with her;
she knew her gifts.
She tried the shirt on, not for size
but for texture.
Was it interesting enough
to come between her
and this new love who had come to her
when she had almost forgotten the unexpected
might take the shape of a man?

She could see him loosening the shirt
as he loosened his own.
Now his, now hers.
The gathered cuffs scalloped and roomy;
the delicate shell buttons
set out in threes, the button loops
softened by use.

—ERICA FUNKHOUSER

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WHEN I was eight or nine, my father's advocacy of classical studies became his unrelenting obsession. In memory his passion seems to have occupied most of my childhood; in reality it probably took two years. Every night he read bulletins from the Department of Education, or a mimeographed sheet from the university's classics department, or *The American Classicist*. Every day the mail brought letters, bulletins, and notices. William Hammer-smith Battell founded the Southeastern Michigan Secondary School Classical Studies Association. When he came home from school and went to his desk, he studied not Horace but statistics about the classroom study of Horace's language. My father ignored my mother and me in order to defend Cicero in the senate of popular opinion. My mother and I still took our afternoon rides on Skylark and Benita, sometimes with Raymond on Bigboy, who needed the exercise, but no longer did the family go on Sunday-afternoon joyrides in the Model A. Sometimes my father brought me with him on a Saturday afternoon in the car to visit someone engaged in the same struggle; they had long, urgent conversations while I tried talking with strange children or knitting mittens or reading my book. My mother stayed home. She read her poets; she kept up with darning and the prodigious canning of summer. She again took up quilting, which she had learned as a girl, to occupy her hours while my father spent himself elsewhere. He approved of quilting—it was classic if not Latin—but his enthusiasm was principled. Ella lacked theoretical passions. When her spectacular patchwork took a red ribbon at the Michigan State Fair in 1937, it was clear that the Idea of Quilthood—not this extravagant bright assemblage—exalted my father's soul. "*Splendidissimus*," he said.

Often my mother and I remained alone together on weekends, quiet in the living room, or riding over dusty fields, while my father drove overnight up to Mackinac Island to chair an emergency meeting called by Michigan Concerned Latinists. No longer did my parents touch each other when they passed in the hallway. My father's eyes behind rimless glasses gazed into the distance, shiny with urgency. My mother's beautiful eyes looked low at hooked rugs and waxed floors, and I heard her sighing, sighing, sighing. I knew she was unhappy, and I sighed as I heard her sigh.

For my tenth birthday, in March of 1938, my parents gave me the sheepdog I had begged for. Memory of Dido as a puppy allows me to date events of that spring, because I recollect her with a love purer than any other; Skylark was dear, but did not follow me to school and to bed. At the library I discovered Albert Payson Terhune's *Lad: A Dog* and its siblings. With my mother I trained Dido; I slept with her; I grew up with her—and when she died of old age at the farm (I was in graduate school, in a female co-op that forbade animals), a part of me died with her.

A month or two after my birthday I woke to hear my parents quarreling. I slept lightly that spring, for Dido wriggled

under the covers or sometimes signaled that she needed to go out. It wasn't an argument that I heard first; it was the sound of my father crying unmitigated tears—a sound I had never before heard. He was not an unemotional man, as men went in those days, and I had heard him weep over a friend's death; but that night I heard a terrible sound—my father's wail of utter misery, as he gagged and coughed and spluttered. My heart pounded and I left my bed in order to run to their room, but then my mother's soft, continual murmur—controlled, persistent—held me back and calmed me, as it was intended to calm my father. I had no notion of the reason for his tears. I heard no words from him except "Ella" among the cries, and "Ella" repeated. When I made out her words, I heard her say that she loved him—but the words carried a cadence of withholding, like "anyway" or "still" or "despite everything." She was trying to console him, but in her tone I heard something I had never heard before, as chilly as a wheat field in January.

For some nights—a week? a month?—I stayed awake deliberately in order to listen. I could not hear everything they said, and maybe I slept through a night or two, though I doubt it. I heard enough. With Dido's wriggling help, I conspired to hear my new parents, my parents as I had never known them. After years of our daily routine—farm, school, horses, chickens, canning, quilting, Sunday rides, radio, Virgil—I entered a moonless darkness of conspiracy as frigid as the stars. Everywhere I went, I carried with me this enormous debilitating secret, something I could not speak of to anyone—not to Rebecca in the hayloft, not to my teacher at school, not to my cousins.

Night after night, when they thought I was asleep, I heard them quarrel. Sometimes they attacked each other. My mother's voice rose and I heard her use the word "divorce," a notion I scarcely understood. I heard my father say, "I'll take the child," and I realized they were talking about me. Increasingly now they mentioned "him," and I became aware that my mother loved someone other than my father. I hugged Dido so hard that she made a squeaking noise and then licked my face. Lying in bed with my dog, my heart pounding, I knew whom my mother loved. Only a short time before, just after my birthday, I had come home from school to find my mother agitated, not looking at me, running back and forth to tidy or do small chores. She told me that Raymond—the boy she had taught to read—no longer worked for us and that old Ferdinand was back, to fill in for a while. I had never liked Ferdinand, who didn't like children or perhaps girls, and I adored Raymond, so I burst into tears. My mother turned on me in a rage (something she never did, not even when I broke a cup of wedding china) and shouted, "Go to your room!"

It was Raymond whom my mother loved instead of my father. That Raymond was ten years younger than she was—feckless though sweet, illiterate, diffident, from a family that lived in a shack, with a father often in jail—did not then oc-

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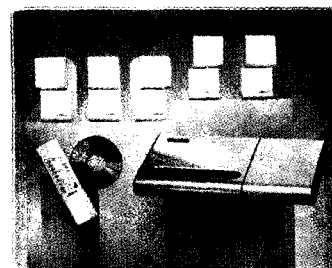
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cur to me. Later I put things in their places: my father had raised himself up, become learned, dedicated himself to the finer things, become “professor” in Abigail; how it must have pummeled him, along with profounder jealousy, that my mother picked *Raymond* to love—Raymond who had never graduated from grammar school. Doubtless my mother loved Raymond at least partly because he was so pitiable, so unlike my distinguished father. Something about Raymond was pathetic or beaten, even hangdog. A combination of prettiness and need made him so attractive.

Listening to my stranger-parents, in their hurts and deliberations, I felt terror and misery. But I also felt exalted: I was a romantic figure, like a child in a book, like the match girl in the snow, a wistful, pathetic product of adult abandonment or deceit. In my conspiracy or secret knowledge, in my separation from my parents and the rest of my world—friends and school and house, everyone but Dido, who listened to my complaints ecstatic with adoration—I felt myself the locus of an extraordinary fate. I thrilled myself with the vision of my despair. I felt ennobled by self-pity and by awareness of, and admiration for, my mother’s recklessness, beauty, abandon, and sin.

One night I heard my father say “Damn you to hell!”—he never swore—and laugh when my mother took offense. I seemed to have been stolen by gypsies. My parents had been gypsies always, disguising themselves as ordinary Michigan people. During the day—I was sleepy, of course; my mother was puzzled when I dozed in my school dress on the hearthrug after school—my parents tried to carry on as they always had. I was impressed by the aplomb with which they behaved, “for the child’s sake.” Their ability to deceive, to be utterly different by day and by night, carved itself into my soul. My father came home from school, put on his overalls, did a few chores with Ferdinand, spoke politely with my mother over dinner, and asked Camilla about her schoolwork. We were a conspiracy of three, a play for three characters. I pretended or dissembled as much as they did, and rejoiced in the skill of my deceit. I pretended ignorance or innocence while I knew for

certain that my parents were cruel enemies inside the appearance of their marriage. Although they continued as if they cared for me, I was alien and an encumbrance. We were three strangers, as only I was aware.

Officially I did not know the facts of life, as we called sex in those years, because parents waited to tell a daughter until she was ready to menstruate. But as a farm child I had watched barnyard copulation. Already I was attempting to read novels written for adults in which men and women—when they loved each other, whether they were married or not—disappeared into the privacy of a blank page to do something that confirmed their love and made for mayhem. I knew what they did; it was wicked and it was wonderful, the most extreme of pleasures and the worst. I knew that

my mother and Raymond—while my father and I were at school, or on weekends when my father and I visited someone—did what the rooster did with the hens; what the stallion Bigboy attempted with the neutered mare Benita.

One night, as my parents spoke in bed, I understood that they were approaching a crisis. The next night at nine o’clock Raymond would come to the house and the three of them would talk. From what was



said I gathered that they would decide about divorce and about “the child.” The next night, after dinner, my father proposed that we ride in the car. It was unheard of that I stay up after seven on a school night; they wanted to tire me out so that I would sleep soundly. Disingenuously I remarked on my late bedtime, and in a single voice my parents said that it didn’t matter, that I could sleep in and be late for school. They seemed unaware how unprecedented their behavior was.

That night I did not need to struggle to stay awake; I set my bedroom door ajar and crouched on the floor with my ear at the opening, hugging Dido, so that I would miss nothing. I heard Raymond—he had an unusual gait—walk up the path. I heard him enter; I heard perfunctory, conventional exchanges. How frightened Raymond must have been. I could imagine his drawn, white, lean, weak, handsome face.

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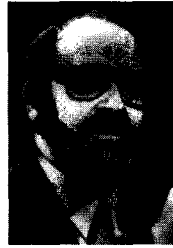
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I heard my father's level voice, grave and formal; I heard my mother weeping; I heard a new sound that I could identify as Raymond's tears. Later I heard my father weeping also—three grown-ups crying in the living room at the foot of the long stairs.

Maybe I dropped off to sleep, leaning between the door-jamb and Dido, because the next sound I heard was a shout of rage or despair, and then came hurried steps and the door slamming and steps running outside. Raymond had run away. I pushed my face around the jamb of the door and saw that my father and mother stood side by side. Suddenly I heard my father scream, "Bitch!" The front door hurtled open, my father shouted, "I'll never be back!"—and I heard the door slam again. I crept to the top of the stairs. My mother stood in the doorway as the Model A started and my father drove away. When she turned back to enter the living room, I stood halfway down the stairs in my white nightgown, a fierce Virgilian warrior who had read Victorian romances. "I have known all," I said.

WITHIN two months my father quit all his associations and societies. In a year his subscriptions had run out. He dismissed Ferdinand, came home earlier from school, and did long weekend chores, farming without help. Later he canceled his annual order for 300 chicks and let his poultry venture dwindle to eggs for our household. He traded Bigboy for an older, more tractable gelding called Rusty, and we three rode together again.

The night of the confrontation my father could not have stayed away for long. We ate breakfast together the next morning; I remember because we had pancakes, a rarity usually saved for birthdays. In my ten-year-old cynicism I made note of our treat. My mother never looked me in the eye; my father praised the pancakes and left quickly, but behaved toward me with his competent affectation of ordinariness, which let me understand that my mother had not spoken of my eavesdropping.

When she saw me on the stairs, as she turned back from the door, her face went dead white. After I made my rehearsed announcement, she struggled quickly to recover herself, and asked questions to find out what I knew. At once I dissembled; her aspect terrified me, and in order to bring blood back into her face I lied or played innocent. When she asked me what I had known, I answered only that my father was not coming back. My mother assured me, grasping for an appearance of calm, that he didn't mean it. Forcing a frail smile, she said, "He'll be back soon, Camilla." They had quarreled about the horses; she wanted him to sell Bigboy . . . When I kept my silence then, my secrecy resumed itself forever. My secrecy dug itself a lightless castle inside the hill. My secrecy bricked up a dungeon door behind which something still languishes.

Our lives restored themselves—at least theirs did, or

seemed to. I doubt that my mother saw Raymond again. Four or five years later he was killed in the war; I know that much only because his name with its gold star ornaments the scroll by the Abigail Town Hall. If anyone else came into my mother's life, later or earlier, I never knew it. My father went back to his Latin classes and his school administration. Every day after chores he sat down to his books, Lucretius more than Virgil, Tacitus more than Livy, some Horace but never Ovid. In the evenings he studied while my mother quilted or revisited her poets, or read novels aloud to my father and me: Dickens, Mark Twain, early Steinbeck. After a while they were touching each other again; I watched with careful, secretive eyes. Two years later my mother had a hysterectomy and told me I would remain an only child.

Surely I was changed forever. Life at the farm was calm, but I lived elsewhere in my fancy. I absented myself by reading stories, imagining myself a reckless heroine or a pathetic victim. Outside the house of fiction I was chronically restless. Nothing in life, I knew, was what it appeared to be. When I read a story by Nathaniel Hawthorne, I recognized the minister and his pious congregation who met at midnight in the woods to celebrate mass for the devil. I knew that by universal conspiracy we agreed to deny the secret wickedness of every human being. We needed, every hour, to understand that the fabric of routine covered unseen deceptions and enormities. We also needed to remember that the cloth must show no rips or tears, and that this covering was as real as anything. I admired the fabrics my father and mother wove, whatever might throb or coil underneath the cloth.

When I left home, at eighteen, to attend the University of Michigan, I contrived to continue the life of fiction. I delighted in keeping two or three boyfriends at the same time; my schemes provided opportunity for plot-making. Majoring in English, I found Henry James, and wrote an honors thesis on *What Maisie Knew*—and I knew what Maisie knew better than my teachers did. My parents were pleased with my academic success. My father offered to finance a Ph.D. if I wished to enter his profession as a college teacher, but I wanted to write rather than to talk about the writing of others. I won a Hopwood in fiction, took an M.A. in library science, and spent many years working in the library at Barnaby Academy in Grosse Arbor, south of Detroit—a servant in the house of fiction, and in the houses of history, poetry, and biography. I found it less necessary to dissemble in my private life as I plotted and published my own literary fictions. Critics sometimes wondered at the violence in my stories, not aware of my provenance as warrior.

My history is not especially interesting; nor was my parents' history, so far as I can tell, after the incident of Raymond. They lived the even life of the cornfields, with their horses and Chevrolets, with their quilts and classical studies. I visited sometimes for weekends. Sometimes we met in Detroit or Ann Arbor for a play or a concert. When I married,

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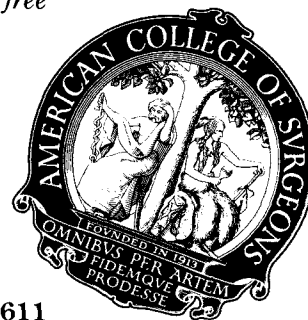
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they approved of my husband, and when Valerie was born, my mother spent two weeks with us, sleeping on the sofa, to help me out. We lived in a dormitory then, because my husband taught French at the academy, and my mother's aging beauty did not escape the attention of the sixteen-year-olds on our hall. During the long illness of my daughter—she contracted leukemia at five, when medicine seldom cured leukemic children—my parents tendered comfort and support. They took a new mortgage after paying off the old, to help with expenses; more important, they supplied their presence, their grief, and their abundant tears.

Our marriage could not survive Valerie's death. My husband and I could scarcely look at each other, and both of us found comfort elsewhere. I fell in love with a student, as it happens, and caused considerable suffering. When my ex-husband, Emil, suddenly flew off to teach at the American School in Beirut, the football coach's ex-wife went with him. Emil subsequently achieved fame, if that's the word: three and a half years as a hostage; freedom; talk shows; a book, in which "an early marriage" received mention.

I remained for two decades in the Barnaby library; the school authorities never acknowledged my escapade—if they ever knew. I settled down among the books and the bookish boys. My fiction enjoyed some success, so the English department borrowed me to teach a writing class. When I was forty-five, I married a widower retired from Ford, a rare executive who loved theater and literature, and we led a good life together until he died, nine years later. I found relative comfort in middle age, as I suppose my parents did.

But I need to say: Even through the worst times—torments and disasters; losses; gains that were worse than losses—I kept on loving my parents. Whatever they did in the dark of the moon, they performed as well as they could in daylight. I honored their brave, sad endeavor. When I sought calm, waiting for electroshock during depression in the worst years, I thought of Sunday rides in the Model A—the back of my mother's neck and my father's trim haircut.

When Latin went down to defeat after the war, my father withdrew from teaching but remained principal of Abigail High until he retired, at sixty-five, the subject of farewell banquets and testimonials. He lived for eleven more years, pruning fruit trees and raising berries on the farm he had brought his bride to. Occasionally he worked at translating Lucretius into blank verse, a project with which my mother helped; her ear for iambic pentameter was more secure than my father's. I keep the unfinished manuscript, with its fussy Victorian diction. When he died, my mother remained on the old place; I moved there when she was eighty, about five years after my second husband died. I read *Tristram* aloud to her, along with *Rabbit, Run*. We walked every day in the pine

woods that grew where hayfields had been. We drove to Ann Arbor for the bookstores, and visited Muehlig's, which appeared to have shrunk. We drove to Detroit to see the Rivera murals again. In desultory fashion I finished a quilt she had started, and I held my mother's hand when she died, last year, at eighty-seven. I board my horse at a neighbor's farm; my latest sheepdog is another Dido; I live in the house where everything happened.

Or almost everything. In her last years my mother kept returning in her mind to her cousin Rudolph, and told me much of what I recounted earlier. I listened hard to understand her, Ella still beautiful in the noble bones of her lean ninth-decade face. When I heard her speak of Rudy's young pedantry, expressed in bookishness and missionary Christianity, I thought of my father, although my father was never troubled by diffidence. Then I made the association that annoyed her. Once, as she spoke of Rudy, she revealed something else, or two things at once: Rudolph's eyes, she said, were a blue-gray one could never forget—light and mild, yet so piercing that they were painful to look at. She remembered such eyes in one other face only—that of a farmhand named Raymond, she said, whom I had probably forgotten.

Her mind remained sharp, although she sometimes wandered among episodes of the past. "Nothing happened," she told me during the last month of her life, "in Willow Temple that day." I knew what day she meant. "But maybe he felt something," she said, and stopped speaking.

"Maybe he wanted something to happen?" I said.

"I've thought so," she said. "Maybe he felt something in his trousers. I've wondered so." I held her hand. "It could have been something as small as that." Then her old humor asserted itself: "Not that I had *witnessed* his dimensions!" She laughed her trim laugh. "It was so long ago," she said. "He wanted so much to go to China. What if something *had* happened in Willow Temple? Sometimes I think he never died." She shook her head to deny dementia. "Sometimes I think he never lived—or that I never lived, or your father. How preposterous we are. Jokes and disasters, that's all there are. Is." Her tone suggested that she spoke without consequence. "The world is *arbitrary*," she went on. "Why did I work at Muehlig's? Why did the pigs die? Why do poets write poems? If insulin had been discovered, I would never have known Huldah; I might have been a Christian. Why did Raymond put a noose over his head?"

Some mistakes you don't point out. Some mistakes lack great implication, though I suspect that nothing is wholly arbitrary—not mistaken names or poisoned pigs or leukemia or a kidnapping in Beirut. The latest Dido let me understand that she wanted to go outside, and I took her walking past fallen outbuildings into the new wood. ☼

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Polls have shown for years that, almost unanimously, Americans want illegal immigration stopped. Despite that, our Federal Government has done very little to reduce illegal immigration, much less stop it. An estimated 350,000 illegal aliens settle here permanently each year. **That is over three times more than the 100,000 a year a majority of Americans favor for total immigration.** These illegal settlers join a pool of an estimated **five to six million** illegal aliens who are already living here permanently in violation of our laws.

The Roper poll cited above showed that 74% of Americans (three out of every four) want illegal aliens identified and deported. So why is our government not doing just that? In 1994 only about 40,000 illegal aliens were deported. A vastly increased program of deportations would not only deter prospective illegal migrants abroad, but also motivate those already here to leave voluntarily.

The Central Issue - Overpopulation

NPG urges a drastic reduction in immigration solely because of its contribution to the disastrous growth of our U.S. population. We are on the path from our present

population of 265 million to a population of nearly 500 million by 2100. More than 90% of that growth will be the direct result of post-2000 immigration.

Immigration is the driving force behind the population growth that is devastating our environment and the quality of our lives. **Primarily because of immigration we are rushing at breakneck speed toward an environmental and economic disaster.**

U.S. Population Size - A Vitally Important National Issue

Other things being equal, **our population size determines our impact on our already over-stressed environment and increasingly scarce resources. The size of our population is, therefore, a vitally important national issue.**

If we are to have any hope at all of creating an economy that will be sustainable indefinitely, in a sound and healthy environment, with an adequate standard of living for all, we need a smaller, not a larger, U.S. population. **But we will never be able to achieve a smaller population unless we reduce immigration to a small fraction of its present level. That is a simple fact.**

Isn't there someone among our political leaders who is willing to recognize the need for a smaller U.S. population and for public policies to achieve it? He or she would have the support of a majority of Americans. The Roper poll cited above showed that 54% of Americans believe that our country is already overpopulated.

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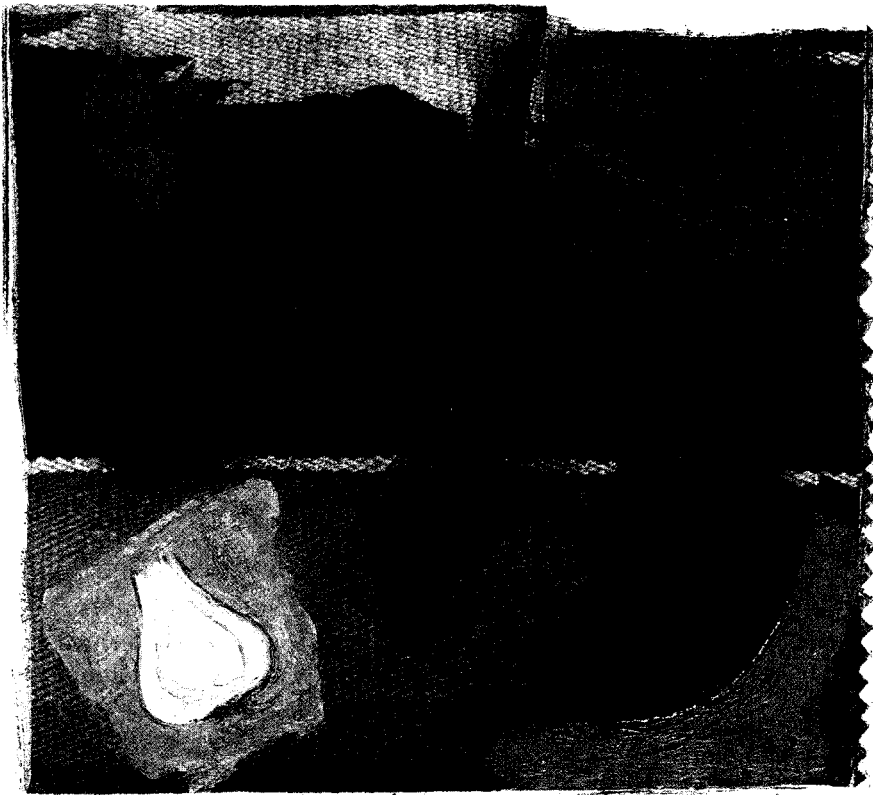
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Salsa Without Tears

*You don't have to go for the
burn to appreciate the subtlety and tingle
of Mexican food*

WHEN they were first married, Rick and Deann Bayless lived in Mexico and fell in love with the country and its food. They transformed a scholarly interest into dishes that demonstrate every night at Frontera Grill and Topolobampo, their two adjacent Chicago restaurants, why they call Mexico's one of the great cuisines. At both restaurants (Frontera Grill is more casual, and offers versions of Mexican street food) I'm always surprised by the subtlety and gentleness of the flavors. Where is the acidic jab of raw onion that I usually regret for hours afterward? The stab of seemingly whole heads of garlic shredded into one dish? The fire of hot chile

peppers mercilessly sliced into a single serving of sauce?

Even though onions, garlic, and hot peppers are abundant in the country's many regional styles of cooking, Rick Bayless explains, the pungency and heat rarely approach the levels common at American Mexican restaurants. At the couple's restaurants I've learned to appreciate what knowledgeable friends assure me is the closest thing to real Mexican food north of the border. For ten years I have consulted the Baylesses' invaluable book *Authentic Mexican* for explanations of various ingredients and dishes. But I didn't think of using chiles with any regularity in my kitchen until I read the new *Rick Bay-*

by Corby Kummer

less's Mexican Kitchen. Bayless incorporates the Mexican idiom into the classic American fare of his Oklahoma childhood and extends it to the "Mediterranean" cuisine so popular today, showing how ingredients I considered esoteric can fit comfortably into the kind of (Italian-accented) food I make every day.

This elemental and relaxed approach is clearest in the first part of the book's summary of the "essential" components of Mexican cuisine—and most immediately apparent in the recipes for salsa. For five years salsa has famously outsold catsup in America (although that simply means more money changes hands: last year 150 million more sixteen-ounce containers of catsup were sold than of salsa). It's easy to see why people have taken to salsa: it has the sweetness of tomatoes and the onion and salt of catsup, along with a more intense flavor and a peppery kick.

"Salsa" has come to mean any kind of relish or condiment that includes, generally, onions, garlic, tomatoes, and chiles. Fruits like peaches and mangoes appear in many bottled salsas, which technically brings them closer to chutneys—but it's not worth being overly concerned with nomenclature. In their excellent *Border Cookbook*, published last year, Cheryl Alters Jamison and Bill Jamison bravely try to define the various regional uses of "salsa" along the U.S.-Mexican border. Chris Schlesinger and John Willoughby, in their delightful small book *Salsas, Sambals, Chutneys & Chowchows*, throw up their hands and tell readers just to enjoy vinegar and spice in the world's condiments. Rick Bayless shows how much more and how much less salsa can be than some of the cacophonous concoctions that go under the name.

DON'T think that Bayless advocates some gringo dilution. He, too, finds the heat of chiles addictive, and he couldn't get by without raw onions and fresh garlic. His "mild" salsas start innocently, and the tingle vibrates with slowly increasing intensity. That tingle is the defining characteristic of salsa—flavors both merged and distinct that dance in and out of focus. The "hot" salsas save their real power for a few seconds after

you've swallowed. But they don't cause pain. True Mexican food—even in the north, which favors the hottest salsas—isn't for daredevils and masochists.

Although Bayless uses "salsa" to mean an uncooked condiment, for its main components—garlic, tomatoes, and chiles—he champions preliminary "toasting" or "roasting," by which he means dry-frying and broiling. This is the secret behind the clarity and distinctness of his salsas, whether at the restaurants, in his recipes, or in bottles (he recently added a line of five Frontera salsas to an overcrowded field). Now—when there are still fresh ripe tomatoes and local onions, and fresh chile peppers are at their peak and available at most farmers' markets—is an ideal time to try making your own salsa, following his basic steps.

A common way to remove the strongest odors from garlic is long simmering or roasting; whole heads of garlic roasted with olive oil until they become buttery and sweet often accompany roasted or grilled meats in Mediterranean-themed restaurants. Bayless's method is faster: dry-frying unpeeled cloves on a hot griddle for ten or fifteen minutes—long enough to steam the cloves slightly inside the browned skin and sweeten them a little, leaving a bit of harsh power.

To render raw onions more digestible, Bayless rinses or soaks them. White onions are the ones to use: they stay crisp, whereas yellow onions soften to mush and, in my experience, quickly acquire a fermented taste. White onions have a cleaner flavor than the comparatively bland, sweet yellow onions, and give a requisite sharpness that sweet red onions lack.

Chefs roast out-of-season tomatoes for several hours or overnight in a very slow (175°–200°) oven to concentrate what flavor they contain. Bayless blackens whole plum or round tomatoes, both in and out of season, on a foil-lined baking sheet. When tomatoes are local and ripe, he recommends roasting, peeling, and freezing large quantities of them to add a jolt of tomato flavor both sweeter and deeper than what sun-dried tomatoes can give.

Chiles, too, should be blackened. I won't go into all the complications relating to fresh and dried chiles, because so many illustrated books, including Bayless's and Jean Andrews's *Red Hot Peppers*, do it admirably. The heat comes

from capsaicin (cap-say-i-sin), the substance that sets chiles apart from sweet bell peppers. (Amal Naj gives an engaging portrait of the chile plant and the people who grow and consume it in his 1992 *Peppers*.) It appears in the inner ribs and the seed pod, the bulbous beige section under the cap; the seeds themselves aren't hot, so removing them is simply a matter of aesthetics.

Anyone used to roasting and peeling sweet bell peppers will know the drill. This preparation is even more important for chiles, because their skin is tougher. Small fresh chiles, such as jalapeños, the hotter serranos, and the very hot habañeros, can be roasted on a hot griddle, and larger ones should go under the broiler. Blackened fresh chiles can be frozen; some cooks say that they retain their flavor better if they are frozen with the skin on and peeled after defrosting.

The capsaicin level in fresh chiles is notoriously variable, and you never know when you bite into one whether you're in for an explosion or a letdown. Jalapeños grown in this country are generally the mildest, and can be safely used for a comparison Bayless recommends: taste a bit of jalapeño flesh without any ribs or seed pod alongside a bit that includes some rib. (Capsaicin is not water soluble and is a potent irritant to the eyes and nose. Use rubber or latex surgical gloves when cutting chiles; if you do get capsaicin on your skin, wash your hands repeatedly in soap and water or in a mild bleach solution.) The ribs and seed pod give not just heat but flavor, which is why chile-lovers are skeptical of breeding experiments like ones being conducted at Texas A&M University to reduce capsaicin in various chiles. A sweet jalapeño without capsaicin has already been bred.

Dried and canned chiles offer reliable heat levels, especially once you settle on a brand (most books on chiles give mail-order sources). When chiles are dried, their flavor intensifies, and sometimes they take on a smoky, sweet flavor that complements the heat. Confusingly, their names change when they are dried. Jalapeños, for example, become "chipotles," from a Nahuatl word for "smoked chiles." Like anchos, which are dried poblano chiles, chipotles are deliciously smoky and fruity on their own. Their afterburn is usually moderate; anchos are hotter.

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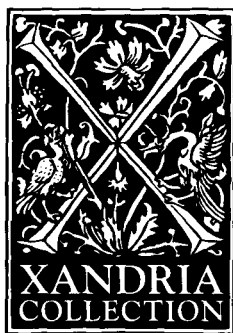
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It might seem curious to "toast" dried chiles, which already look brown and withered, before softening them in water. But on a dry griddle it takes just a few seconds on each side, and they will acquire a smoky quality beyond any they already have and a deeper flavor. Bayless has decided after much experimentation that hot tap water is best for rehydrating dried chiles, and that any time longer than a half hour will leach out too much flavor (he also thinks the soaking liquid is best thrown out, because it is often bitter). He recommends soaking chiles to be used in salsas for no more than fifteen or twenty minutes—just enough to make them pliable. In salsas chiles should pack their maximum punch.

FOR a fresh salsa that Bayless calls "a simple first step toward experiencing the real Mexico," broil on a foil-lined baking sheet a pound of ripe tomatoes (two medium or six to eight plum tomatoes), keeping them about four inches from the heating element. Use a baking sheet with sides, to collect the juices. After the tomatoes have blackened and the skin has puckered on one side, turn them over with a spoon or tongs and let the other side blacken. They should be completely soft. Cool, and remove as much of the skin as you can (some will conveniently stick to the foil; you don't have to remove the seeds unless you object to their appearance), and set aside the tomatoes with their juices.

Meanwhile, heat a griddle or a heavy-bottomed pan and dry-fry over medium heat two large whole fresh jalapeños (about one ounce) and three unpeeled garlic cloves, turning to blacken all sides. The chiles will blacken in five to ten minutes, the garlic in ten to fifteen. Cool the chiles, pull off their tops, and peel both them and the garlic, using a knife or your hands. (Remember to wear gloves.) Only the stem will interfere with flavor and must be removed; if you prefer a milder flavor, remove the seed pod and cut away the ribs.

The authentic way to finish the salsa is to grind the chiles and garlic with a mortar and pestle—the big black porous basalt kind popular in Mexico. But you can use a food processor if you pulse the blade carefully, to avoid liquefying the mixture. First grind the chiles and garlic with a quarter teaspoon of salt until they

form a paste (stop the machine once or twice to scrape the bowl). Add the tomatoes and pulse a few times, allowing some small chunks of tomato to remain. In a bowl stir together the mixture, any remaining tomato juices, and half a small white onion, finely chopped, rinsed well under cold water, and drained. Season with half a cup of chopped cilantro, if you like, and a teaspoon or two of cider vinegar; add a few tablespoons of water if necessary to bring the salsa to a pleasing consistency.

This is a perfect dipping salsa for the freshest corn tortillas you can find. In her appealing new *Mexican Light*, which includes a number of easy salsa recipes, Martha Rose Schulman codifies a discovery I made years ago: it's easy to make your own chips in a microwave oven, cutting or tearing fresh corn tortillas into triangles and heating them on paper towels until they harden and start to blister. Bayless suggests mixing a cup of the salsa (no water added) with three coarsely mashed avocados for a guacamole that, he assures readers, is traditional. You can also spread two cups of the salsa over a single layer of five- to six-ounce fillets of fish—such as snapper, mahi-mahi, grouper, or bass—set in an oiled baking dish and bake, covered, at 400° until the fish just flakes when pressed. This will take about eight minutes for fillets three quarters of an inch thick.

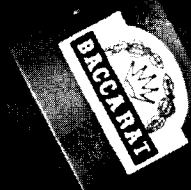
The logical extension of this fresh, mild salsa is a tomato-chipotle salsa whose caramelized flavors, from roasted vegetables, are further concentrated by a quick simmering in oil at high heat—in essence, sautéing the sauce. With its subtle and alluring heat, the sauce can go on chips or serve as a building block of a specific dish—as do most salsas, cooked and uncooked, in Mexico. Bayless likes it so much that he uses the sauce more than any other as the base for dishes in his book.

Broil and peel one and a half pounds of ripe tomatoes—about three medium or nine to twelve plum tomatoes. On a dry griddle over medium heat dry-fry three to four dried chipotles (they are sometimes called chiles chipotles colorados or chiles moritas), about a quarter of an ounce in all; or use two or three of the larger chiles chipotles mecos. You can get immediate results by using three or four canned chiles chipotles en adobo (vinegary

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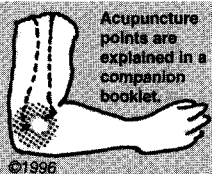
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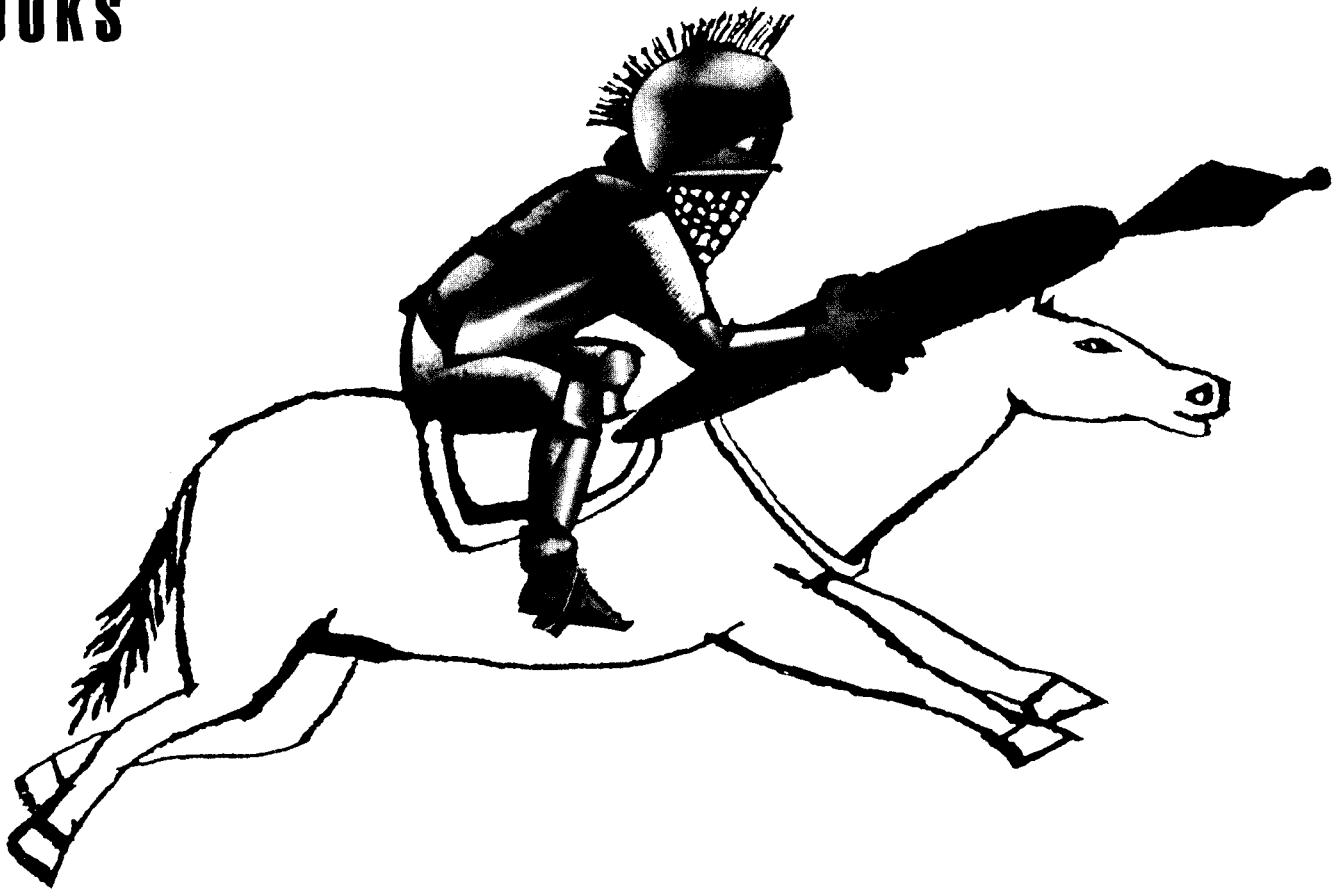
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tomato sauce), drained. If using dried chiles, snap off their stems, heat each side for a few seconds, and press the chiles with a metal spatula until they crackle and you can just smell them. Transfer them to a bowl and cover with hot water. Soak for twenty minutes, stirring the chiles often, until they are easily pliable; drain. While the griddle is still hot, dry-fry four unpeeled garlic cloves for ten to fifteen minutes, turning them until they blacken. Peel and roughly chop the cloves. In a food processor pulse the combined ingredients just until they reach the texture of a thick tomato sauce.

The traditional, and by far the tastiest, medium in which to fry and reduce the sauce is lard. If you don't like the idea or can't find any, use olive or vegetable oil; heat a tablespoon of the chosen fat in a two- or three-quart saucepan until a drop of the sauce sizzles on contact. Add the sauce all at once and stir with a heat-proof spatula for about five minutes, until the color deepens to a brick red and the sauce thickens.

You could use this sauce over pasta, or for chilaquiles—a Mexican analogue to a hearty baked pasta, using corn tortilla chips. For four servings, put into a large saucepan a full recipe of the sauce; two cups of any kind of broth, better if it isn't salty; eight cups (eight ounces) of tortilla chips, preferably homemade or unsalted; and a handful of epazote leaves, a common Mexican herb, or a cup or two of sliced chard or spinach leaves. Simmer over medium-high heat, covered, for about three minutes, to soften the chips and blend the ingredients. Uncover the saucepan, stir to distribute the chips (they should not be mushy) in the thickened sauce, and sprinkle each portion with crumbled Mexican queso añejo (aged cheese) or grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese.

Naturally, any salsa is subject to manifold variations, using the vegetables and herbs you have on hand. After you've made various tomato-based salsas, you should try tomatillos, the citrusy husked fruit that is equally essential in Mexican food, and is widely available in supermarkets; it's easily roasted, and you don't have to peel it. Books like those by Bayless, the Jamisons, and Schulman show that you don't have to cross an ocean to find many of the virtues of a Mediterranean diet. ☼



Clinton Scandals, Inc.

Whitewater, the author writes, exemplifies the old saw that a lie can travel halfway round the world before the truth has got its boots on

by Martin Walker

IN January of 1995 the Outlook section of the Sunday *Washington Post* was about to publish a very long article by Roger Morris and Sally Denton, based on research Morris had been doing in Arkansas for his new book, *Partners in Power: The Clintons and Their America* (Holt, 526 pages, \$27.50). At the very last minute, after eleven weeks with the article, the paper, which had delayed publication three times, began to dither again. Morris and Denton angrily withdrew the piece, and the Washington rumor mill buzzed for a few days. Clinton-haters speculated that the article was all about the use of the Intermountain Regional Airport, in Mena, Arkansas, as the base of operations for secret arms going out to the Nicaraguan contras and cocaine being smuggled back in, with Governor Bill Clinton's connivance, and that this dam-

aging material had been censored by the *Post's* liberal editors. Clinton supporters said that the article was thin stuff, anonymously sourced, and not up to the rigorous standards of the *Post*; it had therefore quite properly been spiked. There were jests that Roger Morris—a principled chap who, with Tony Lake, had resigned from the National Security Council in protest over the 1970 invasion of Cambodia—had spent too long in Arkansas.

In fact the article was sourced with documents and affidavits, and included intriguing new material. But it was all about Oliver North and George Bush and the contras, and contained very little about Clinton. The *Post's* executive editor, Leonard Downie, had approved the piece for publication, and after long wranglings the lawyers pronounced themselves satisfied. Printing was then

postponed not because of Democratic loyalties but because Robert Kaiser, the managing editor, was struck, he said, by the fact that "our own reporters had looked at this material and found zero grounds to justify the inferences drawn."

The fuss was a classic example of a curious new subculture, the Clinton legends. All sorts of scandalous and criminal things are alleged and believed about Clinton by his enemies, and utterly rejected by his friends, who have spawned their own counterlore about the anti-Clinton conspiracy. The result is an almost Manichean standoff between the loathers and the loyalists, now a feature of Washington life as it once was a feature of Little Rock life. Clinton seems to inspire this kind of antagonistic intensity, and all books about him seem condemned to fuel it.

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Roger Morris, whose biography of Richard Nixon was a minor classic, has produced a deeply infuriating sprawl. He keeps abandoning Clinton for extended excursions into the mood of the Reagan years, corruption in Washington, the compromised media, and the Iran-contra affair. One gets the impression that Morris has written a book on each of these topics, shoehorned them all into an occasionally empathetic essay about Bill and Hillary Clinton, and then tossed in a grandiose college thesis about the underlying currents of twentieth-century American political history. In the opening paragraph of a ponderous chapter Morris writes, "In the growing convergence of the Republican and Democratic Parties there was a slow-motion coup d'état in American politics and governance." It goes on to say, torturing the argument into forced relevance, that this process began as Clinton's father died in a car crash in 1946.

Partners in Power is the work of a disillusioned liberal Democrat who spent a lot of time in Arkansas, heard all the gossip about Clinton, and chose to believe most of it. The critical faculties that Morris deployed to such effect in his books on Nixon and Alexander Haig appear suspended in a book that recalls G. K. Chesterton's observation on the end of faith: when people cease to believe in God, they do not then believe in nothing but start to believe in absolutely anything.

Morris concludes that "by the spring and summer of 1996 investigators from one congressional committee have begun to gather sworn testimony linking the president of the United States to drug money and organized crime." That is that; no supporting evidence is presented. Take it or leave it.

But Morris can still write arrestingly well, can capture the boomtown atmosphere of Little Rock and its bond markets in the mid-1980s so precisely that the pages almost steam. And there are sections of this book—among them a haunting account of the degree to which Clinton and his baby half-brother were, like their mother, beaten and abused by their drunken stepfather—that are better than anything else that has been written about the family. Morris understands

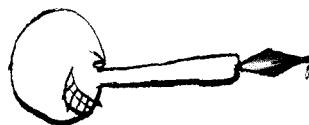
how much the man from a town called Hope was really the young slicker from the glittering sleaze of Hot Springs. Far more than any other writer, he also seeks to understand the constraints and tensions within the suburban placidity of Hillary Rodham's childhood. But again, his control slips, and the writing descends into adjectival incontinence.

There was no real hiding the quiet cruelty and pain. The sense of stunted or denied love, a resort to refuge outside the family, the alternating warmth and vitriol, compassion and sarcasm, the tightly controlled yet seething perpetual anger not far beneath the impenetrable shell—all would be visible in the independent but camouflaged woman she became.

IN short, Morris has produced a psychological study that struts—one is tempted to say masquerades—as a definitive investigation into the Clintons of Arkansas. There are lurid accounts of parties in Little Rock at which expensive call girls were burned by cigarette butts and high school girls were given cocaine. (They are presumably included to tar Clinton by association and implication—there are sly suggestions, rather than firm assertions, that he took part.) And some of Morris's writing has an unpleasantly tabloid quality.

According to numerous witnesses who slowly emerged from the shadows, drug orgies were hardly the governor's only sensual pleasures. . . . Police files brimmed with allegations of drug running, ties to organized crime, and even murder alleging the involvement of a well-known Arkansas businessman and some of the governor's closest supporters.

The sections on Clinton's alleged cocaine use are, in terms of serious evidence, less than convincing. There is no doubt that Clinton's brother, and some of his fundraising circle, used cocaine. Furthermore, Clinton was at least briefly at parties where some people, possibly in other rooms, used cocaine. Big deal. There cannot be many politicians of the 1970s and 1980s of whom that could not be said. The sources Morris cites are dubious: anonymous cops, "a convicted



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An Oxford classmate of Clinton's, Jackson was a young Republican who in 1969 helped Clinton with his draft problems. The relationship then soured. By

1992 Jackson was organizing an anti-Clinton advertising campaign during the New Hampshire primary. He was an amateur, but the professionals were about to move in. Floyd Brown, the author of the notorious Willie Horton ad in the 1988 presidential campaign, returned in 1992 to promote a telephone service playing tapes of Clinton's conversations with Gennifer Flowers, the woman who claimed to have been his mistress. Brown's partner, David Bossie, later joined the investigative staff of Senator Lauch Faircloth on the Senate Whitewater Committee. Richard Mellon Scaife, through his newspaper the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*, advanced the theory of foul play behind the supposed suicide of Vincent Foster. One of the heirs to the Mellon banking fortune, Scaife also helped to finance Accuracy in Media and the Western Journalism Center, organizations that bought advertising space in the mainstream press to publicize these allegations. Together with the marketing of anti-Clinton videos by the TV evangelist Jerry Falwell, these assaults on the Clintons helped to create a subsidized culture of scandal, designed to sap the Clinton presidency if not destroy it.

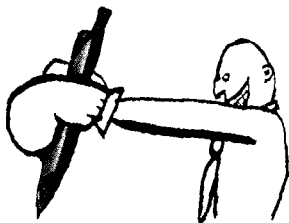
With enemies like these, the Clintons should not need friends. But they do—largely because of what the Arkansas journalist Gene Lyons, in *Fools For Scandal: How the Media Invented Whitewater* (Franklin Square Press, 224 pages, \$9.95), suggests is the near vendetta that the press, and in particular some writers at *The New York Times*, seem to be waging against them. The eminence of that newspaper has tended to spare it the criticism that some of its reporting and comment have deserved. Consider the initial report, of March 18, 1994, on Hillary Clinton's \$100,000 profits in the cattle-futures market. Written by Jeff Gerth, who also wrote the first Whitewater stories, it contained one serious error and some unsettling sleights of hand.

The *Times* said that Hillary Clinton had been helped by "a friend who was the top lawyer for one of the state's most powerful and heavily regulated companies." In inconvenient fact Jim Blair, a friend of Bill Clinton's, was not at the

time employed by the Tyson food empire. He joined Tyson later, after losing millions in the same futures market that Hillary Clinton had wisely abandoned in time. While she was trading, in 1979, her husband the governor was infuriating Don Tyson and the chicken lobby by failing to raise the weight limit on Arkansas roads and allow bigger and heavier trucks on the state's highways. The implication of the *New York Times* article was, in the words of its subhead, that the "company thrived in Clinton years." A benefit Tyson received, the *Times* alleged, was "\$9 million in government loans." This was false, and was later retracted by the *Times*, which alleged instead that Tyson "did benefit from at least \$7 million in state tax credits." So it did, following state economic-development legislation passed five years after Hillary Clinton had traded. And the tax credits, which were for investments, were legally due to any company that made similar investments.

In sum, Gerth had a terrific story in Hillary Clinton's extraordinarily profitable investments. But he then overegged the pudding by implying a broad pattern of corruption and quid pro quo, and in the process going a lot further than the evidence could justify. And when Gerth made a serious factual mistake about the nonexistent \$9 million in state loans, it was grudgingly and unfairly corrected, and new insult was added to old injury. This is not what one expects from *The New York Times*, and it casts a shadow upon the paper's other assaults on the Clinton presidency, in its overheated editorials and in the influential op-ed columns of William Safire, who has called Hillary Clinton "a congenital liar."

Gene Lyons, of the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, is not known in Little Rock as a Clinton loyalist, and it seems that he was first inspired to unpick the *New York Times* version of Whitewater by a kind of local patriotism. He was outraged at the way big-city reporters flew in "to portray the entire state of Arkansas as a veritable American Transylvania: a dark, mysterious netherworld populated by a mob of ignorant peasants and presided over by a half-dozen corrupt tycoons in



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What are the facts?

Jerusalem—reunited and indivisible. Before the Six-Day War in 1967 Jerusalem was divided, the Jordanians having occupied the eastern part of the city. During their 19-year reign, all Jewish residents were driven out, all Jewish places of worship closed or destroyed, and Jewish cemeteries desecrated. The various Christian denominations, with important churches and sacred places in Jerusalem, were hampered in their activities and operated under the strict control of Moslem authorities.

With the liberation of all of Jerusalem by the Israel Defense Forces after Israel's victory in the 1967 Six-Day War and with the

reunification of the city, Jerusalem truly became free and open. Just as the whole world rejoiced when the ugly wall dividing Berlin was torn down and the city reunited, so do we rejoice that the wall, the barbed wire and the machine gun emplacements have been torn down in Jerusalem.

U.S. Embassy not in Israel's Capital. While the Palestinians lay claim to the eastern part of Jerusalem, not even the Arabs themselves question that the western part of the city is Israeli. It is remarkable therefore that the United States has steadfastly insisted on placing and keeping its embassy in Tel Aviv, instead of in Jerusalem, Israel's capital and the seat of all government offices. It is as if a government accredi-

ed to the United States were to insist on keeping its embassy in, say, New York or Chicago, rather than in Washington, D.C.

With the U.S. in the lead, all other countries, with the sole exceptions of Costa Rica and El Salvador, have also located their embassies in Tel Aviv, rather than in Jerusalem. It is a bizarre situation; because no government business is conducted in Tel Aviv. The U. S. maintains diplomatic relations with over 150 countries. In all of them, the U.S. Embassy is located in the city that the particular government designates as its capital. The only exception is Israel where, so far, our government has insisted

"The question of the status of Jerusalem goes to the heart of the Arab-Israel conflict. To deny the status of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel questions the legitimacy of the state."

embassy in a city other than the capital. **Congress in favor of moving**

Embassy to Jerusalem. Despite the fact that, prior to their election, both President Clinton and Vice President Gore, assured the public that the U.S. Embassy would be moved to Israel's capital, the Administration has until now blocked all moves in that direction, declaring that it would jeopardize the so-called "final status" talks on Jerusalem.

Leaders of Congress—both Republicans and Democrats—have introduced legislation by which the U.S. Embassy would have to be moved to Jerusalem. That legislation has been endorsed by 93 senators. It is to be expected therefore that, before too long, reality will prevail and that the U.S. Embassy will indeed be located in Jerusalem—the capital of Israel, one of our closest allies.

The reason given for not moving the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem is that it might violate "Arab sensitivities". While there would be some posturing, none of the Arab states could afford to do much else. Egypt would not refuse its yearly multi-billion dollar subsidy from Washington. King Hussein of Jordan would not jeopardize the lifeline that the U.S. has extended to him. Even the PLO would soon return to the negotiating table. The question of the status of Jerusalem goes to the heart of the Arab-Israel conflict. To deny the status of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel questions the legitimacy of the state. The move of the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem will signal Yassir Arafat once and for all that he will not get U.S. and world support for the division of Jerusalem and for the establishment—in any part of it—as the capital of a new Arab state.

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collusion with the Clintons as the Count and Countess Dracula."

Affronted by this fashionable view, he produced an essay in *Harper's* and now this book, which leave the *Times* and Gerth with some serious questions to answer. He does not quite sustain his claim that "the Washington media had turned itself into a wholly owned subsidiary of the Republican Party." But he makes a strong and entertaining case that the whole Whitewater business is "possibly the most politically charged case of journalistic malpractice in recent American history."

THERE are four important facts to bear in mind about Whitewater. First, at the time the Clintons initially invested with Jim McDougal in the Whitewater property, McDougal was neither a banker nor a savings-and-loan man. Second, all the evidence suggests that McDougal later sought to defraud the Clintons, transferring assets out of the company, selling the remaining Whitewater lots for a secondhand airplane he fancied, and leaving Bill and Hillary Clinton responsible for the original loan. Third, the most serious and professional inquiry yet conducted, by the law firm of Pillsbury, Madison & Sutro, which was commissioned by the Resolution Trust Corporation, in effect cleared the Clintons and put McDougal in the dock. The legal team included the Clinton critic and former U.S. attorney Jay Stephens, who was among the group of Republican-appointed attorneys ordered to resign shortly after Clinton took office. Fourth, Beverly Bassett Schaffer, Clinton's appointee as Arkansas securities commissioner, did not have the power to close the Madison Guaranty S&L but tried hard to get the federal authorities to close it.

The New York Times appears to owe Schaffer a profound apology. That is one point on which James B. Stewart, the author of the best-selling *Blood Sport: The President and His Adversaries* (Simon & Schuster, 479 pages, \$25.00), seems to agree with me. His book has been much praised, and it is a decent journalist's attempt to make something readable of a paltry set of transactions and balance sheets. Stewart, too, concludes that the Clintons were guilty of no criminal activity—except perhaps one small thing,

which he mentioned in his appearance on *Nightline*. Hillary Clinton broke the law, Stewart said, with the 1987 Whitewater loan-renewal application; she submitted "a false financial document" that inflated the value of the property.

Whoops. As Joe Conason, of *The New York Observer*, established, Hillary Clinton was right and Stewart was thumping-ly wrong. He had failed to read the back of the personal financial statement for the loan-renewal application, where she had explained the valuation in detail. In capital letters at the bottom of the document, where Stewart could hardly have missed it, was the warning "both sides of this statement must be completed."

Whitewater exemplifies the old saw that a lie can travel halfway round the world before the truth has got its boots on. It can get even farther when spurred on by politically partisan dirty tricksters and investigative reporters who read only one side of the paper. To do the Whitewater saga justice any fair-minded person, citizen or voter, must read Gene Lyons. He is a better writer than James Stewart, knows more about Arkansas than Roger Morris, and appears in print to be a far more reliable reporter than the miserable Gary Aldrich.

This is not to whitewash the Clintons. The evasions and prickly legalisms that have marked their behavior over Whitewater since arriving in the White House may yet bring serious trouble. In this sense Clinton Scandals, Inc., may be said to have succeeded, locking the First Family into a pattern of defensiveness that has threatened under media and partisan pressure to become a pathology. The need to cleanse their surroundings of all but loyalists underpins the firings at the travel office and the disturbing furor over the improper requisition of FBI files. The Clintons may plead that they were driven to it, and even paranoids have their enemies, but Presidents are not supposed to behave this way or to tolerate subordinates who do.

By comparison, any offenses they may have committed back in Arkansas seem relatively trivial. They were foolish to trust the smooth-talking Jim McDougal with their savings, and there is not much doubt that Hillary Clinton took full and enthusiastic part in the moneymaking activities that rendered the 1980s the decade of greed. She broke no laws, and in a

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checkered investing career she won some and lost some. Bill Clinton was as ethically casual, and as ruthless, about his political fundraising in Arkansas as most other American politicians. He was not much involved in personal financial matters, not because he was stuffing his nose with cocaine or torturing call girls but because he was governing a small state well enough to be consistently re-elected by his own people.

The voters of Arkansas got to know him reasonably well as a flawed but engaging sprawl of a man with entirely human appetites and weaknesses and a lot of good intentions. Above all, he had a gift for politics and a capacity to inspire and lead people which usually, and on the whole, delivered more public good than harm. It is as much as most citizens expect from their politicians, and more than most of them deliver. ☛

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*The New Press, 305 pages,
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"IT may be assumed that any article dealing with the sex side of life and explaining the functions of the sex organs is capable in some circumstances of arousing lust," Judge Augustus N. Hand wrote in a 1930 opinion reversing the conviction of the birth-control advocate and social activist Mary Ware Dennett for "mailing obscene matter." The prosecution of Dennett had arisen from an informational pamphlet called "The Sex Side of Life: An Explanation for Young People," which Dennett had writ-

ten for her two adolescent sons fifteen years earlier, and which had become popular among sex educators. Dennett had been convicted under an 1873 federal obscenity law, which was inspired and primarily enforced by the anti-vice crusader Anthony Comstock, and which, as amended, banned the mailing of not only "every obscene, lewd, or lascivious, and every filthy book, pamphlet, picture, paper, letter, writing, print, or other publication of an indecent character" but also any "article or thing designed, adapted, or intended for preventing conception or producing abortion."

The "Sex Side of Life" trial and appeal briefly made Dennett into a free-speech celebrity ("GRANDMOTHER FOUND GUILTY IN SEX LIFE PAMPHLET TRIAL," one headline reported) after she had spent decades as a dogged but little-known activist for women's suffrage, birth control, and other causes. Constance Chen's book, the first full-length Dennett biography, has now rescued its subject from historical obscurity. Chen was fortunate, while doing research as a Harvard writing fellow, to come upon Dennett's substantial archive, then recently donated by Dennett's older son to Radcliffe's Schlesinger Library. As a result, much previously unavailable primary source material has gone into the book.

Chen's biography is a guided tour through the major American social movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Dennett and her husband, the architect William Hartley Dennett, began as New England enthusiasts of the British-born Arts and Crafts movement of the 1890s, but after a bitter separation shattered her hopes for happiness with Hartley and their two sons, Dennett moved to New York in 1910 to take a job with the National American Woman Suffrage Association. She soon proved her organizational abilities by revitalizing a stagnant movement that had failed to win any new states for women's enfranchisement in the preceding fourteen years. Within the next three Dennett led the association to victories in Washington, California, Oregon, Arizona, Kansas, Illinois, and Alaska. Chen writes, "Although unrecognized today, Mary Ware Dennett was the turning point for the NAWSA."

In New York, Dennett became in-

volved with Heterodoxy, a Greenwich Village group of female activists and intellectuals who gave her moral support during what must have been a tough time emotionally. (She lived alone, having reluctantly left her sons with friends and relatives in Massachusetts.) Although she led a relatively staid life in a tiny, spartan apartment on Fifty-fifth Street, Dennett immersed herself in a bohemian subculture that supported the Wobblies, touted feminism and free love, spawned the sophisticated radical magazine *The Masses*, and encouraged sexual experimentation. It was during this period that she wrote "The Sex Side of Life." Liberating in its affirmative, orgasmic approach to heterosexual intercourse, the work's most antique note is struck when Dennett exhorts her sons to resist the lure of masturbation, because "the sex secretions are specially needed within your body," and "you [should not] use them wastefully before you are grown."

Dennett's own sexual adventures were evidently modest. Chen only briefly mentions a disappointing affair with an unnamed married man and an entanglement with an ardent lesbian admirer, Marie Smith, which was probably unconsummated. Dennett for the most part channeled her energies into politics: in addition to her women's-rights work she found time for pacifist activism against U.S. preparedness and served as executive secretary of the meeting committee of the National Civil Liberties Bureau, the predecessor of the ACLU.

IT was in the midst of all this activity that Dennett encountered the charismatic Margaret Sanger and became involved in the birth-control movement. Contraceptive devices and information had been legal in the United States before the Comstock law; even abortion in the early months of pregnancy was legal until the mid nineteenth century. Cultural and economic changes—in particular the onset of Victorian prudery—led to the suppression of previously available birth-control methods and information and, indeed, of any public discussion of sexuality. One of the ironies suggested by Chen's biography is that Dennett's parents may have had more knowledge of birth control than did she and her feckless husband. Chen implies—though explicit information is apparently lack-

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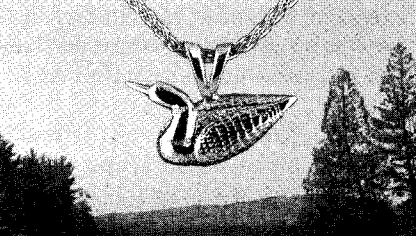


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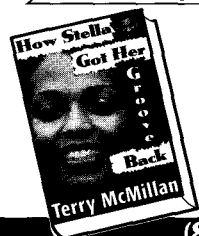
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ing—that because Mary and Hartley were ignorant of reliable contraceptive techniques, sex in the Dennett marriage ended (or very nearly so) after Mary's three painful and dangerous pregnancies (the third was life-threatening, and one child died shortly after birth).

Dennett obviously regretted this enforced celibacy and to some extent blamed it for the breakup of her marriage. Her decision, in 1915, to fix upon birth control as her major political and professional commitment was, Chen writes, impelled by her firsthand knowledge of "the dangers and sadness child-bearing could bring. . . . For rich and poor alike, the mostly male medical establishment let out the secret of contraception only at its own discretion. The resulting ignorance held all women under its yoke. . . ." Thus, Chen reports, after listening to Sanger speak at an early birth-control meeting, "Dennett may have realized that birth control held staggering possibilities for improving the lives of all women."

Comstockery had by then suppressed both information about contraception and access to simple though hardly foolproof techniques for achieving it. These ranged from coitus interruptus and douching (Comstock, given enforcement powers by both the U.S. Postal Service and New York State, prosecuted pharmacists who did nothing more than sell syringes) to condoms and vaginal pessaries that combined known spermicidal substances with sponges or other materials to block the cervix. Such devices were advertised in the United States until the Comstock legislation outlawed them, though they continued, ironically, to be available in England, the home of Victorianism.

Chen does not explore the reasons for the growth of Comstockery, but Ellen Chesler, in her 1992 biography of Margaret Sanger, *Woman of Valor*, explained the suppression of birth control and other sexual information in the late nineteenth century as part of a "conservative social backlash that followed the Civil War." Describing a not wholly unfamiliar political situation, Chesler wrote,

Native white Americans concerned about the apparent threat to their hegemony from European immigrants and free blacks took refuge under a banner of social purity and reli-

gious orthodoxy. They were joined by religious fundamentalists, physicians looking to secure their status, and self-proclaimed feminists who believed they were promoting their own autonomy by regulating sexual behavior and by attacking pornography, alcohol, and vice.

Anthony Comstock was thus in the right place at the right time, and succeeded in passing obscenity laws that placed new prohibitions on sexual information and vastly expanded existing ones. Comstock's powers were so great, Chen relates, that he was able to jail the author of a newspaper editorial deploring society's treatment of unwed mothers.

INSPIRED to commit herself to the fight for birth control and against Comstockian repression, Dennett unfortunately soon found herself embroiled in a bitter rivalry with Sanger that weakened the movement and ultimately defeated Dennett both personally and professionally. Chen writes that Sanger was a ruthlessly ambitious, rigidly controlling, "myopic and intolerant" egomaniac who could not brook competition. When Dennett founded the National Birth Control League, and later the Voluntary Parenthood League (VPL), and began to lobby for the repeal of state and federal bans on birth-control devices and information, Sanger did all she could to sabotage the effort. At this point, whether on principle or for reasons of political expediency, Sanger favored an "elitist" approach to legislative reform, a "doctors only" bill that gave the medical establishment control of contraceptive devices and information. Dennett, unwavering in her belief in both free speech and reproductive autonomy, insisted on a "clean repeal" of the birth-control ban.

Neither bill ever passed. But Dennett, who worked almost exclusively on the legislative strategy, emerged from the struggle demoralized and, as she wrote to her friend the British sex educator Marie Stopes, having barely escaped a nervous breakdown.

My six years of stiff worrisome work in the VPL sapped my vitality a good deal; especially did the things which went on behind the scenes tax my endurance. This combined with some strenuous personal problems broke my resistance.

Chen's harsh view of Margaret Sanger is not entirely new: both Chesler's biography and Linda Gordon's classic 1976 study of birth control, *Woman's Body, Woman's Right*, described Sanger's headstrong and dictatorial personality. But Chen's portrait is so severe that it will most likely be controversial, given Sanger's emergence as the clear victor both in her contest with Dennett and in her immediate political strategy for birth control—not to mention her current canonization as a reproductive-rights prophet. What Chen ignores, of course, is that Sanger, however numerous were her defects, had genius. Her early direct-action civil disobedience against the Comstock law, resulting in a number of highly publicized sojourns in jail, added fire to the cause in ways that Dennett's more polite legal and organizational strategies never did. And however questionable may have been some of the deals Sanger made along the way, ultimately she did create an organization, Planned Parenthood, that grew to be one of the most effective providers of reproductive health care in the United States, as well as an important advocate for the still-embattled cause of reproductive freedom in the United States. Dennett's legacy is less visible: no lasting organization is associated with her name. Soon after a crushing legislative defeat in 1925, Dennett retired from public life, exhausted and disheartened. She lived until 1947, still writing articles and letters, and sitting on the boards of various public-interest organizations.

The most sobering aspect of Chen's story goes beyond the personal failings of these two remarkable women to suggest how their differences over strategy slowed the nation's rejection of Comstockery. (It was not until the Supreme Court's 1965 decision in *Griswold v. Connecticut* that access to contraceptives and contraceptive information was established as a constitutional right, at least for married couples; in reality, of course, condoms were furtively available, despite state-law bans.) Indeed, the self-defeating rivalry between Sanger's American Birth Control League and Dennett's Voluntary Parenthood League was only one instance of the chronic in-fighting that characterized virtually all the movements Dennett embraced, and that plague like movements to this day.

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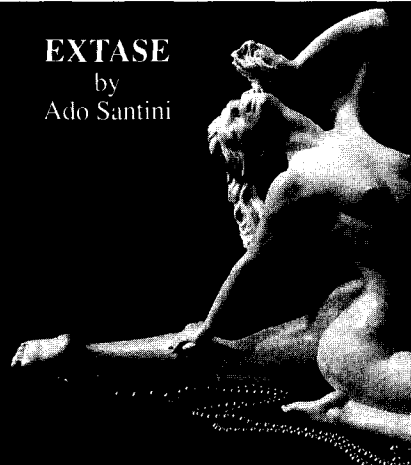
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Chen's book does not really analyze these issues, and cannot compete with Chesler's or Gordon's on the level of historical analysis.

"*The Sex Side of Life*" is also disappointing in its relatively abbreviated treatment of Dennett's prosecution for obscenity and its aftermath—an important occurrence, for the appellate decision in *United States v. Dennett* signaled the unraveling of Comstockery as a matter of constitutional law. A year after Judge Hand's decision the federal courts dismissed another obscenity case, this one against Dennett's friend Marie Stopes (*U.S. v. "Married Love"*), and in 1936 a federal court ruled that a statute derived from the original Comstock law could not be used to bar the import of contraceptives for legitimate medical use, thus essentially supplying by judicial interpretation the "doctors only" exemption that Sanger had been seeking legislatively (*U.S. v. One Package Containing 120, more or less, Rubber Pessaries to Prevent Conception*). Meanwhile, in 1933 Judge John M. Woolsey had liberated James Joyce's *Ulysses* from the U.S. Customs Service's obscenity ban, in a memorably literary opinion observing that the effect of Joyce's novel was more "emetic" than "aphrodisiac" and that "in respect of the recurrent emergence of the theme of sex in the minds of [Joyce's] characters, it must always be remembered that his locale was Celtic and his season spring." After those decisions it was only a matter of time before official censorship in the United States began to recede and before the figure of Anthony Comstock became more ridiculous than respectable in the public mind.

Yet even in an era glutted with commercial speech and imagery exploiting sex, Comstock's shadow is still with us. His federal obscenity law remains on the books, largely intact. To be sure, the Supreme Court over the past forty years has laboriously narrowed what the law covers, so that now only "hardcore pornography" is criminalized. But the definition of what is proscribed is still so vague that in the past few years prosecutors have charged art in museums, literature, and social commentary under obscenity laws—perhaps the most notorious example being the Cincinnati prosecution of a museum director in 1990 for exhibiting photographs by

Robert Mapplethorpe. In addition, the relative narrowness of the Supreme Court's obscenity test has led Comstock's present-day equivalents to fashion laws against "indecent"—a much broader category of speech about sex which encompasses images or writings that may have substantial literary, artistic, or other value. In February, President Bill Clinton signed the Communications Decency Act, making it a crime to post

any "indecent" words or images in cyberspace if a person under age eighteen might see them. (A federal court struck down the law in June, and the government has appealed to the Supreme Court.) Our current Congress is returning to Comstockery by increasingly fashioning laws that ban "lewd, lascivious, filthy, and indecent" speech. Mary Ware Dennett's battles are, evidently, far from over. ☼

BRIEF REVIEWS



The Letters of Vincent Van Gogh

*selected and edited by Ronald de Leeuw,
translated by Arnold Pomerans.
Penguin/Allen Lane, 560 pages,
\$32.95.*

If Van Gogh had never become the painter that he was, he might well be remembered as one of the greatest of nineteenth-century letter writers. His letters were copious as well as brilliant, amounting in one edition to four volumes, and from this mass of material Mr. de Leeuw has selected a progression of those that chronicle the artist's zigzag path, of failed jobs, futile enterprises, and impractical schemes, to suicide and greatness. Most of the letters were to Theo, the brother who supported Van Gogh through years of poverty and unsold pictures. The letters cover a wide spectrum of ideas, literary references, experiences, and locations. They have engaging flashes of humor: on his arrival in Arles, Van Gogh observed "the priest in his surplice, who resembles a dangerous rhinoceros." The painter had long since recovered from a bout of religious fervor during which his sister described him as "groggy with piety." There are sharp accounts of his difficult relations with his parents. On one visit home, broke and shabby as usual, he wrote that the Reverend van Gogh and his wife "shrink

from taking me into the house as they might from taking in a large shaggy dog who is sure to come into the room with wet paws" and "could easily bite—he could easily become rabid—and the village policeman would have to come round and shoot him." His descriptions of scenery are enchanting evocations of shape and color. The late letters from Arles, concerning his recurring bouts of irrational behavior, are impressive and saddening in their cool analysis of what he had come to recognize as an illness producing anguish and terror, but "now that it has all been abating for 5 months I have high hopes of getting over it." That was in May of 1889. By September he had "abandoned any hope that it won't come back." His last letter to Theo raised, once again, the idealistic dream of a painters' cooperative to thwart the machinations of dealers, and included an order for paint and a description of his latest canvas. It is dated July 24, 1890. He shot himself on July 27 and died two days later. Mr. de Leeuw's choice of letters and his editorial additions are admirable. He fills in the inevitable gaps, lifts pertinent quotations from omitted letters, and discreetly reminds the reader that Van Gogh's account of events is strictly his own, not necessarily shared by other participants. As a young apprentice to a London art dealer, Van Gogh had advised little brother Theo, "Keep up

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your love of nature, for that is the right way to understand art better & better. Painters understand nature & love her & *teach us to see.*" Vincent van Gogh has taught a lot of us to see. His letters, and Mr. de Leeuw's superb editing, permit us to see him.

Bound Feet and Western Dress

by Pang-Mei Natasha Chang.
Doubleday, 215 pages, \$22.95.

Ms. Chang is an American of Chinese ancestry—a combination that led her to feel as a young woman that she inhabited a cultural limbo. To combat that sense of rootlessness, she investigated her Chinese inheritance through the memories of her great-aunt, Chang Yu-i, whose story constitutes this book. It is a story of progress from the old China to Europe, to a prosperous teaching and business career in the new China of the 1920s, to Hong Kong to escape the Communist revolution, and finally to the United States, where Yu-i's son was well established. Through all these experiences, which included an unsuitable arranged marriage to a poet who left her stranded in England, Yu-i retained and practiced the traditional Chang values of family loyalty and service to senior relatives, including the parents of the husband she divorced. Her life is an impressive record of adaptability on the one hand and stubborn adherence to principle on the other. Her feet, by the way, were not bound, and she never felt comfortable in Western dress.

Masaccio

by John T. Spike.
Abbeville, 245 pages, \$95.00.

The Florentine painter Maso di ser Giovanni, called Masaccio, was born in 1401 and died in 1428. During his short career he produced a large body of work and introduced such novelties as feet set solidly on the ground and faces individualized to the verge of caricature. He wasted no time on writing artistic manifestos, and if he ever talked about his painting, nobody recorded what he said. Mr. Spike therefore has nothing to go on concerning Masaccio's ideas beyond intelligent conjecture, which he exercises with restraint. What this beautifully illustrated book does provide is sound de-

scription and analysis of the frescoes with which Masaccio moved painting from medieval, iconic formality to the action and realism of the Renaissance.

The Handmaid of Desire

by John L'Heureux.
Soho, 264 pages, \$23.00.

Mr. L'Heureux writes with amusing liveliness and a sharp eye for human folly, but this latest novel is lopsided, because it contains not a single Houyhnhnm to contrast with a population of academic Yahoos. These range from the merely boring to the despicable. Olga, the handmaid of the title, is an exotic literary type imported to enliven a semi-stagnant, intrigue-ridden English department at a California university that, one gathers, it would be inadvisable to attend. Once installed, Olga slyly encourages the resident faculty members to do what they really want to do, either sexually or professionally. There is no reason to expect improvement from the ensuing upheavals. Perhaps the best way to view this coldly savage work is to see Olga as an illustration of the fiction writer's mind in action, reordering reality to an imagined pattern by a merciless conversion of people into puppets.

Free City

by Eric Darton.
Norton, 176 pages, \$18.00.

The free city of Mr. Darton's satirical fantasy appears to lie somewhere in the Low Countries in the late seventeenth century, and his narrator is a somewhat rattle-witted scientist who has just "foundered on the unforgiving shoals of chemistry." (Translation—he blew off the tip of his finger.) His rich friend and patron, Roberto, has taught a duck to speak. Roberto has political ambitions, which he pursues by means of both duck and scientist. Roberto represents capitalism; the narrator represents technology; the duck appears to represent both ethical responsibility and disinterested scholarship. Although the narrator's pseudo-archaic prose is sometimes a bit exasperating, the parable of embattled humanism versus amoral financial greed has both bite and humor. The defective mechanical dragon is particularly effective.

—Phoebe-Lou Adams



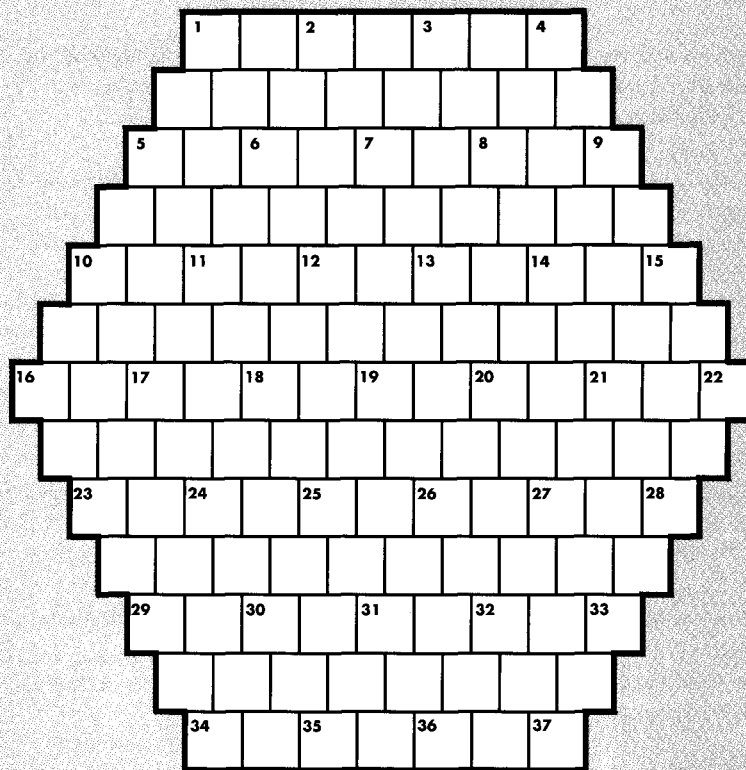
THE PUZZLER

by Emily Cox and Henry Rathvon

Got a Match?

Each of this puzzle's 37 clue answers is to be entered in the diagram with its first letter in the appropriately numbered cell and the remaining letters rotating clockwise around the first. The 18 outermost entries proceed clockwise from border to border without ever crossing it. Of the 19 interior entries, seven are seven letters long and 12 are only six letters long. This means that in 12 cases a non-numbered cell lacks a match (that is, a letter shared by two entries). Non-numbered cells may only contain matches; therefore 12 unmatched letters will have no place to go in the diagram. If you want to see the light, darken the 12 empty cells and remove the unmatched letters to the blanks below the diagram, in the order of the entries from which they came. Answers include six capitalized words.

The solution to last month's Puzzler appears on page 115.



Clues

1. In conversation, bother for a source of light?
2. Serpent runs across touchy dragon
3. Lightly slaps yellow doormat
4. Love Boat sent back for veggie
5. Had an encounter, lying about one's intended
6. Colonial government invested in copper for emperor
7. Liberal ordains progress
8. Ray adopts resistance chant
9. Slightly adjust temperature, having little power
10. Least crumpled old hat
11. Smelly piece of cheese eaten by frog
12. *Hamlet* youth swallowing lethal amount of drugs

13. Pressed DeNiro wrongly
14. Make light of a belch, rudely
15. Pale yellow blemishes seen from behind
16. Sweetheart tied knot in recital
17. Gem dealer lost about a grand
18. Belgian affair involves them briefly
19. Confederacy's unit of distance
20. Rush is behind Conservative reprimand
21. *Oklahoma!* actor, getting married, is tying knots?
22. "Shoe" covering fight
23. Rush first installment of story to press
24. Servant bearing many years in servitude

25. "A Huge Amount of Nothing" penned by Russian author
26. Composer not seen in opera house before one
27. Glen clutches his unopened bag
28. Secure dollar parking
29. Ring incorporating red gem
30. Criminal on the side of Germany
31. A pulp publication about an old Spanish kingdom
32. Cast number in *Shangri-la*
33. Watch with fascination
34. Surrounded by enemy, left hazard at sea
35. Farmer gets inside combine
36. A bunch of geese flying in slight wind
37. Agent takes in a harvest

Note: The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving, send an addressed, stamped long envelope to The Atlantic Puzzler, 77 North Washington Street, Boston, Mass. 02114.

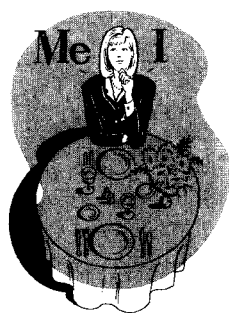
WORD COURT

by Barbara Wallraff

Many of my friends and co-workers use *me and I* incorrectly. For example, "Will you go to lunch with Mary and I?" or "Why did you not contact Jerry or I?" I know that in both cases it should be *me* and not *I*, but I have a problem explaining this. My friends all think that I do not know the correct usage because English is not my first language.

Gallina Franz
Flagstaff, Ariz.

English-speakers get into trouble surprisingly often with *I* in constructions that include other persons ("Mary and I," "Jerry or I"). But, really, there's no mystery about *I* and *me*: one uses *me* exactly where one would if no other person were involved. "Will you go to lunch with . . ."—who would ever say "*I*" at that point?



This test, though, won't help with one phrase that people commonly get wrong: *between you and me*. The rule here is that *between you and me* is always right, and *between you and I* is always wrong. This despite my correspondent Richard K. Redfern, of Bradenton, Florida, who writes, "I have come to believe that *between you and I* is good English. Among well-educated people I have heard *between you and I* much more often than *between you and me*."

Surely well-educated people ought to want to demonstrate a familiarity with the rules of grammar. *Between* is a preposition, and the objects of prepositions must be in the form of objects, not subjects. As Theodore Bernstein observed in *The Careful Writer*, most people "would not dream of saying or writing *between him and they* or *between her and we* . . ." He argued, too, that "an isolated instance or so of bad grammar culled from even the most gifted writers does not con-

stitute a valid authentication for that particular misuse."

As the self-appointed grammar policeman in my university department, I have banned the word *proactive*. It is an ugly word that, to me, has no meaning. "I want a proactive response to this request." Why not simply and more clearly say "I want an energetic response" or "I want a decisive response"?

My research assistants, particularly one who was an English major, think I'm hopelessly mired in ancient and irrelevant efforts to preserve the King's English. They're wrong, of course?

Dennis W. Johnson
Washington, D.C.

Language, like clothing and food, has its fashions, and in certain circles *proactive* is fashionable for the time being. Those who like the word find it forward-thinking and alert, and they may be tempted to use it where they want to convey that feeling—whether its actual meaning, which is "pre-emptive" or "anticipatory," applies or not. When the word crops up, perhaps you should begin saying mildly, or writing in margins, "Do you mean *anticipatory*?" Until then there's no point in being, well, *proactive*. It's best to judge a word case by case.

For free, for free, for free! These words are used incessantly and don't even sound right. Is this usage correct?

Frank Rossillo
Bronx, N.Y.

The phrase has been used often enough for it to qualify as accepted informal usage, but standard English it's not. *Free* means "for nothing," after all, not just "nothing." Once, *for free* was meant jokingly—rather the way some people use *irregardless* now. As your ear has told



you, its grammar is peculiar. *Free* being an adjective or an adverb, it can't very well be the object of the preposition *for*. Dictionaries tend to call the phrase an idiom and treat it as a variant on *free* alone—which it

is. Still, pity the person who has written, "I wanted to get the car *free*." One can't tell whether the writer has entered a sweepstakes or called a tow truck. Here, if the sentence is about a sweepstakes, the temptation to write *for free* is great.

In the July Word Court you wrote this sentence: "I suspect this is one of the many things that aren't being taught in high school anymore." The proper grammar is "One (of the many things [prepositional phrase]) that isn't . . .," no? Is that not being taught in eighth grade anymore?

Erika Warmbrunn
Seattle, Wash.

"One of the many things I admire about Word Court's readers is that they say what they think." This sentence and the high school sentence, you'll notice, are constructed along different lines. This one fits together conceptually so: "Of the many things I admire . . . , one is that . . ." But "Of the many things that aren't being taught . . . , this is one" is how the other one works. The version you propose, therefore, would not be correct.



Have you recently had a language dispute that you would like this column to resolve? Write to Word Court in care of *The Atlantic Monthly*, 77 North Washington Street, Boston, MA 02114, or send E-mail to MsGrammar@TheAtlantic.com. All letters become the property of Word Court.

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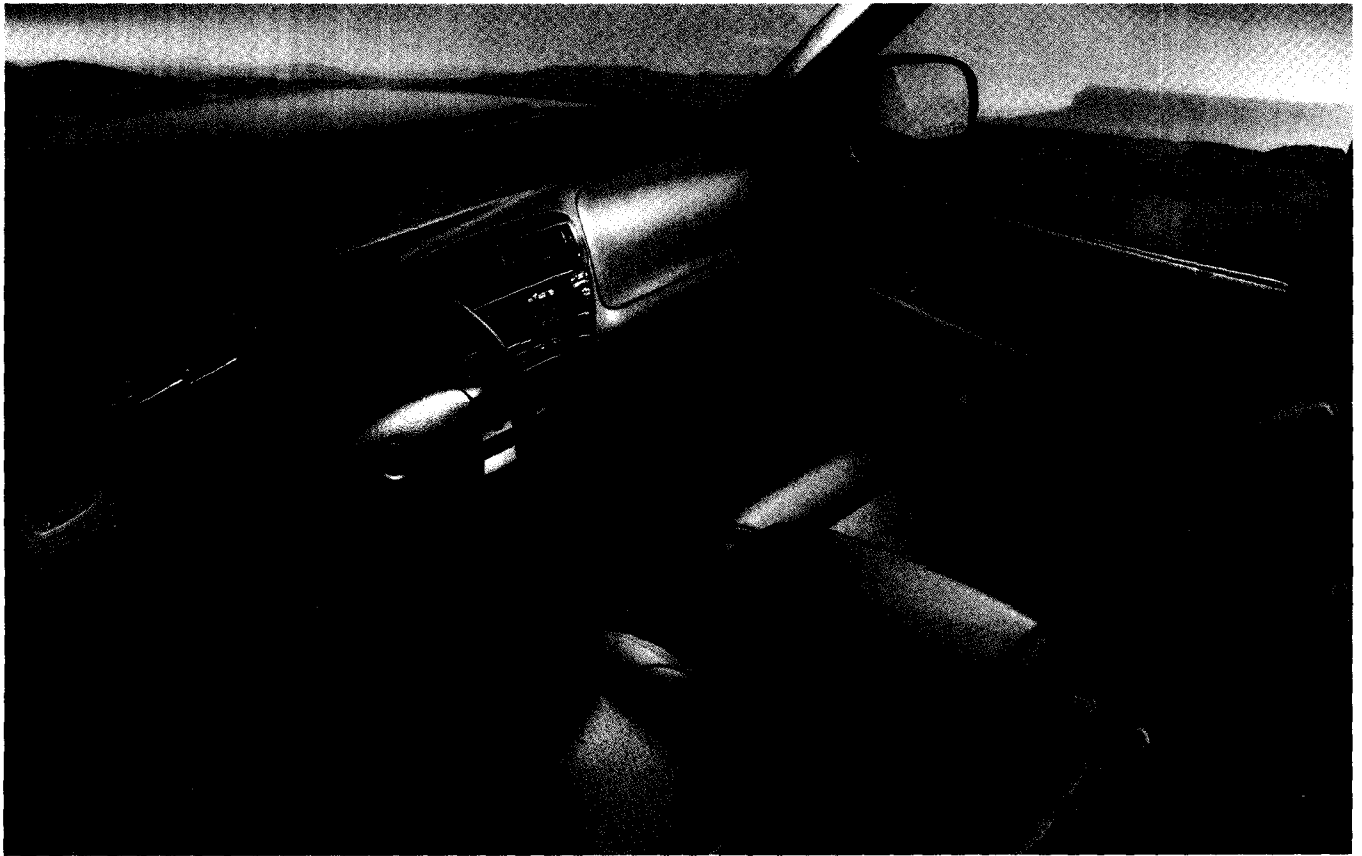
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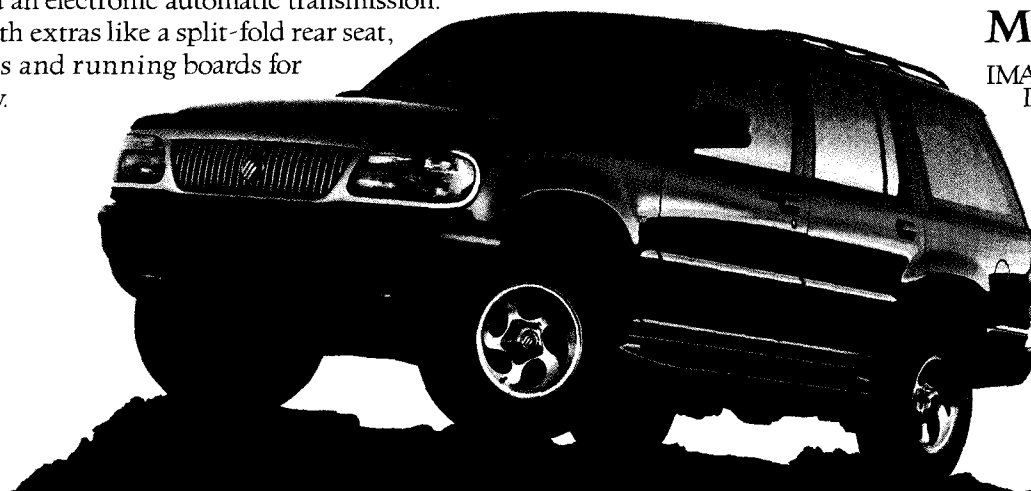
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